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THE
PROPHET'S
WIFE

ANNA C.
BROWNE



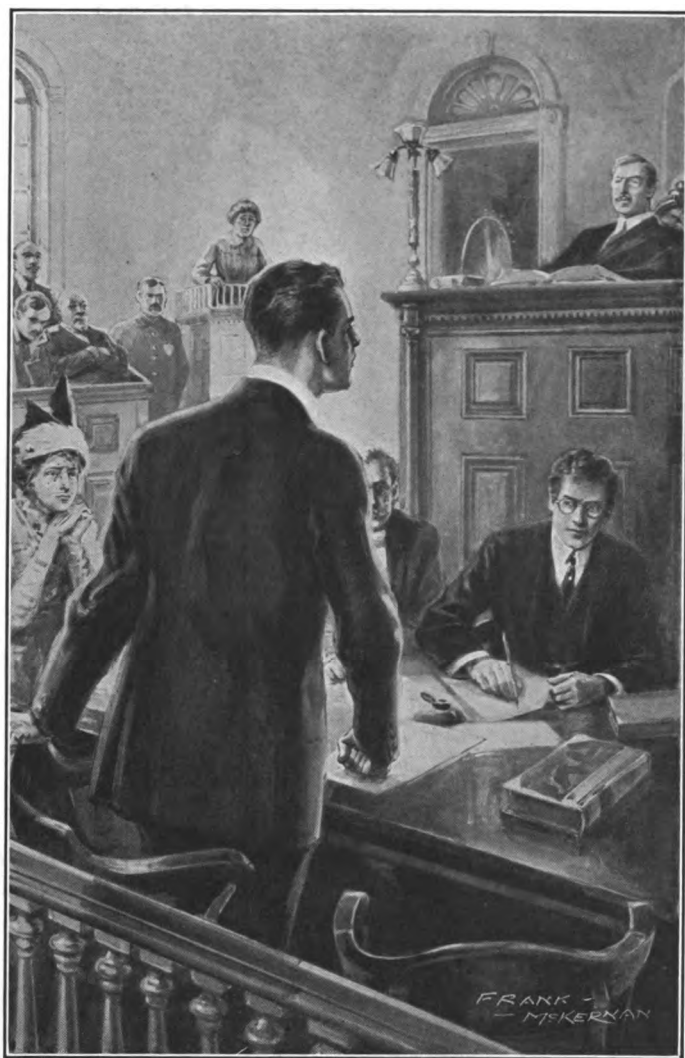
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THE PROPHET'S WIFE





“Will you be kind enough to answer that woman’s question?”—Page 92.

The Prophet's Wife

BY
ANNA C. BROWNE



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	7
CHAPTER II	12
CHAPTER III	25
CHAPTER IV	38
CHAPTER V	55
CHAPTER VI	70
CHAPTER VII	81
CHAPTER VIII	98
CHAPTER IX	120
CHAPTER X	133
CHAPTER XI	148
CHAPTER XII	166
CHAPTER XIII	185
CHAPTER XIV	198
CHAPTER XV	216
CHAPTER XVI	232
CHAPTER XVII	240

THE PROPHET'S WIFE

CHAPTER I

ARTHUR LEE's sixth birth-day was a day of wonders. Just as the sun came peeping through the windows, father appeared at his bedside and whispered,

"Come, little man; I have a present for you."

In a second Arthur was by his father's side, pattering through the hall and down the long stairs to mother's room.

"Quietly, son," whispered father; "mother has been quite ill. Can you be very still if I let you see what she has for you?"

Arthur promised. He would have promised anything then for the silence and mystery that enshrouded this strange gift had quieted him as nothing else could.

At the door an unfamiliar nurse smiled at

him; but he pushed past her into the darkened room where his mother's face, as white as the pillows that surrounded her, smilingly bade him advance. Then the world seemed to stand still, and the words that usually came so fast deserted him. He fell on his knees at the bedside.

"Is it—mother," he stammered, "is—it—a—*real* little sister?"

Father was now on the other side of the bed and he it was who answered, "Yes, son, God has sent you the best present in the world."

Mother smiled up into father's eyes and he kissed her and then quietly lifted Arthur to his feet and bore him away.

It was Sunday and the rain poured ceaselessly, but Arthur did not even know it, for all day long he kept vigil by the bedside, devouring with his eyes, "*his* baby, *his* little sister."

For days afterwards he stood at the gate for hours at a time and called to every one he knew, "Have you seen my baby? Her name

is Dorothy; do come and see her." At length the novelty wore off and the joy mellowed.

One evening, a month after baby's birth, Walter and Clare, the parents, were talking and as usual planning and dreaming about the future.

"It is so good for Arthur to have a sister," said Clare. "It will help him to be gentle. Sometimes he frightens me with the spirit of conquest he shows. I would hate him to grow up with a love for power and a determination to accomplish results at any cost. I suppose it is the spirit of the age, but it worries me to see it so pronounced in one so young. Tom laughs at me and says it is a pity that a pair of 'star gazers,' as he dubs us, should have such a strenuous boy."

"Never mind your brother," returned Walter; "don't you know that relatives always know more about the bringing up of children than do their parents?"

"Yes, than do their parents," repeated Clare slowly. "But, dear, something happened to-

day that disquiets me. Arthur came in and told me that he had knocked the Woods boy down, because he had declared that Dorothy is not Arthur's sister, because I am not his mother."

Her husband's face became grave in a moment.

"This must be my last summer at the Bluff. The boy is very precocious and we must be careful."

"You are quite right," agreed his wife. "It will be a wrench, but the dear boy's happiness must not be clouded." And her eyes wandered lovingly over the moon-lit waters of her own dear river as though bidding farewell to the scenes of her happy girlhood.

There was silence on the porch for several minutes, then Walter, turning suddenly to his wife, caught her two hands in his and, looking straight into her eyes, exclaimed:

"I believe you would even tear your heart out for his sake."

"Ah! no," she answered; "some one comes

even before Arthur in this heart and as long as we are together we can carry these scenes with us and the memories of the summers beside the Hudson will always help us towards our ideal. But what a sentimental pair we are!" she laughed. "It is time we began to have sense, an old married couple; why we are more than two years married and here we are billing and cooing still!"

"It seems like two days," announced Walter, "and if it is to be our last summer here I am going to be just as sentimental as I like."

But here a great wail rent the air.

"The baby is hungry," cried Clare, jumping to her feet.

"Let Mary give her the bottle; do stay, I want you so much this evening."

"But it is Mary's evening out; I must go. I told you we were an old married couple with no time for the sentimental side of life." And with a laugh she was gone.

CHAPTER II

THE eight following years were for Clare and Walter years of anxiety, sorrow, and care. During these years the angel of death had twice visited their home, taking two infant girls. Clare herself had passed through a long and critical illness and, to crown all, an unfortunate investment had wiped away their entire bank account and they were now wholly dependent upon Walter's earnings in his practice among the poor. The young lawyer had had to work hard during these years, for his practice among the poor (his chosen field in the days of his prosperity) was not lucrative.

Poor Clare's pride was bitterly taxed by living in a cheap apartment. But never a murmur came from her; still her husband understood as well as if she had spoken, though it was not until a certain afternoon, when he

came home unexpectedly, that the whole truth of what this poverty meant to her dawned upon him.

Coming in early, he found her seated on the floor mending a great rent in the parlor carpet. She with her weak back and beautiful white hands! His head swam and the blood tingled in every vein.

She did not hear him and sewed on for several minutes before looking up. When she did see him, she started like a guilty child caught in some form of mischief.

He assisted her to a rocker and flinging himself into a chair by the table avoided meeting her eyes.

"What is it, dear?" she asked. "Something has gone wrong to-day! Something has happened?" She could not fail to see the suffering in his face, but misunderstood the cause.

"Yes," he answered sadly, "and the question is, how often has it happened when I have not been here to see, and what else have you

been doing, you who were never meant for such work! I have been blind, buried in my own cares, taking things as they came and never stopping to ask what you are doing. I am almost glad God has taken your father and mother. What would they think of me had they seen you to-day!"

"Don't be a goosie," whispered his wife, her arm about his neck and her cheek against his. "There never was a husband like mine."

"Don't," he cried almost roughly, for him. "I have let you blind me too long. Only think, dear, if I should lose you! You know we men are selfish and our first thought is our own loss. My high ideals and lofty aims would die in the dust without your inspiration and co-operation. It is you and only you that keeps me from being like the rest of them, and, after all, perhaps the ninety-nine are right—at least their wives live in peace and comfort."

"Walter!" she cried, and there was a sob in her throat. "Don't malign yourself. You are depressed. Don't look at things through

blue glasses. I will tell Hannah to bring you a cup of tea; and, by the way, did you have any lunch? Of course, I knew you hadn't. Now that is what makes me cross. Suppose I were to lose you?" And with a smile and a kiss she was gone.

During Clare's absence Walter fell into a reverie. Yes, he told himself, it was the first time he had stopped to think in eight years. Eight years! And what had she been doing all that time! Or rather what had she *not* been doing! True she had Hannah, but after all what was Hannah, a mere hoyden! Yes, he told himself bitterly, it is all very well to have high and noble ideals and let your wife scrimp and scrimp and wear herself out. His thoughts flew back to the day when she and he had stood together on the steamer and she with the enthusiasm and impetuosity that always carried her away had exclaimed: "I think it would be the grandest thing in the world to make the judge, the jury, and the world feel that the poor should have the lightest sen-

tences, for they have so many more temptations than we have!"

And he had answered: "Clare, how did you ever put it into words? How did you guess the secret aim of my life? I have dreamed of some such career ending with a judgeship that would teach the world mercy as well as justice."

In his present mood he called the Clare and Walter of that day a pair of idealistic fools. Well, they had tried to work out their high ideals and where had it brought them? To the very verge of poverty! And this very day he had spurned an offer that would have meant prominence for himself and comfort, if not luxury, for his wife and children. Why had he done it? He did not know. It was not he, it was Clare through him, he told himself. But, from to-day, he would be different. He would be more firm; he would crush his boyish ideals and work for money, money, money, as they all did; he would smother that over-sensitive conscience, that pity and sym-

pathy for the poor that made him take a tenth part of what any other lawyer would take, when he won a case, and nothing if he lost it. After all, his first duty was to his wife and family.

At this point in his meditation Clare returned bearing a tray, and he noted how much Hannah had done. However, he smiled his thanks and set to work—and to-day it *was* work—to accomplish what he knew his wife wanted, namely the utter annihilation of everything on the tray. While he ate she sat beside him, talking brightly while her busy needle flew, for her hands were never idle.

When he had finished he walked to the fireplace and stood looking into the coals. Clare felt something in the atmosphere, but, like the wise woman she was, she let things alone and waited for him to speak.

At length he began, still looking into the coals: "Clare, after the Carey verdict this morning, which was, as we had hoped, one thousand dollars damages against the company,

a railroad agent named Green approached me, and after saying many flattering things about my conduct of the case ended by offering me the position of one of the assistant counsels for the road. Like the fool that I am I refused and lost my temper and said something very hot and much louder than I meant to, so that the encounter was overheard by a number of the crowd, and like all crowds they joined Carey in three cheers for 'our lawyer,' as they call me."

Clare's face flushed with pride and though she looked up she did not succeed in meeting his eyes.

"Well," he continued, "I have decided that I have no right to decline this offer when it means so much to my wife and children. It is all very well to be independent when your bread and butter is assured and your wife and family comfortable. I am now going to write to Green and accept his offer. He left me with the remark, 'I'll hear from you later.'"

There was silence in the room; the clock

ticked audibly and Clare sewed feverishly, though without looking up. The temptation was strong. No longer to scrimp, good clothes for the children, and to get out of this neighborhood—many thoughts rushed through her brain.

Her husband walked over to his desk and began to write. She watched him furtively. In five minutes the letter was written and he was about to seal it when he felt his wife's hand on his arm. He did not look up.

"Give it to me," she said. He handed it to her and watched her as she walked away. In another moment he was by her side and they were both watching their temptation go up in smoke.

"Dearest!" she whispered, her head on his shoulder. "Do you know I love you, Walter, not the Walter that penned those lines. Let us forget that to-night has ever been."

"So be it," he replied as the last flame died into ashes.

That evening Thomas Thornton, Clare's

brother, and Mabel, his wife, "dropped in," as they called it, and when Clare and Mabel had left the room Tom took occasion to speak plainly to his impractical brother-in-law.

"See here, Walter!" he began. "What in the name of goodness is this tale that is going the rounds about you? You certainly managed that Carey case brilliantly and that speech, why it brought tears to even my eyes, and you know that is no easy thing to do. Old fellow, you have a brilliant future before you! Judge Nash remarked afterwards: 'That Lee carries a man off his feet, for he feels and means every word he utters.' Now, why under heaven did you so quixotically refuse Green's offer? It would be the making of you and lead to all kinds of opportunities. And there is Clare. Of course, she's your wife, but hang it all, man. She is my sister, too, and the pinching does not make her grow fat!"

The blood rushed to Walter's head. Though a quiet man he was hot blooded, and

sometimes Tom went too far on the strength of his brotherly affection. Walter had swallowed his anger on more than one occasion rather than have Clare suffer the grief that bad feeling between her husband and brother would have occasioned her. His old habit of self-control came to his aid to-night, and after a silence during which Tom puffed at a cigar, Walter quietly asked: "Which is worth while, a life of love or a life of wealth?"

"That's just like you," replied Tom, "always up in the air. Why not love and wealth together? A well-lined pocketbook helps love along."

"Well, suppose you *had* to choose," insisted his companion, "suppose they did not go together?"

"Then give me wealth," said Tom desperately.

Walter gave him a quick look and added:

"Ask Clare how she would choose."

"Oh, Clare is hopeless!" went on Tom. "She would even take to scrubbing rather than

give up an ideal, no matter how impossible of realization. But you are a man."

"Yes," said Walter, his anger breaking out in spite of himself, "I am a man; therefore I should smother every spark of right feeling; I should give up all that makes life livable! I set out with the intention, neither maudlin nor heroic, of making my living out of service to the poor. Mercy and Justice have been my watchwords. I have tried to show the judges, the juries, the courts, that there is another side to crime in these criminal courts of ours. I have succeeded so far in a small way; just now you yourself have borne witness to the fact. However, I have failed on the money side. To take a fee that would be just to the poor is where the shoe pinches. I have not given Clare and the children the comforts which they should have, and God knows that is what is weighing on my mind to-night, but were I to give it all up to-morrow she would despise me, and though money might come peace would depart," finished Walter, in a voice suppressed

with emotion, and he strode out of the room and across the hall to his study, closing the door behind him. He knew that he had laid his heart bare to Tom and his pride revolted at the thought that he had exposed himself to the ridicule of this eminently practical brother-in-law.

But this time he misjudged his companion, for Tom, not at all put out by his prey's retreat, sat looking into the coals and musing sadly.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, standing up and throwing his cigar into the grate. "You've got to admire him in spite of yourself! What possibilities and lost opportunities! What is there about the man that makes you fall under his spell in spite of yourself?"

As he and his wife walked home that evening, Tom asked: "Well, how did you come out? Did you scold her, and who got the best of it?"

"Right always conquers," replied Mabel quietly.

"That's true, but what is right?" asked Tom slowly. "You are very brave in your own opinions until you see Clare, and in a second she has you around her finger. What is there about those two that bewitches and disarms one at every turn?"

"They are sincere," she replied, "and though in moments of depression at Clare's sad circumstances I try to make myself believe that she is all wrong, when with her I can not but see through her glasses. Oh! Why are the standards of God and the standards of men so opposed?"

"You've got me," replied her husband, "and as philosophy never was in my line let us change the subject as we always *have* to do after these encounters. You are on Clare's side to-night, but where will you be to-morrow?"

"Wait until to-morrow," answered Mabel archly.

CHAPTER III

THE next evening Walter Lee hurried home through the dusk. He had had a strenuous day but it had also been a day of surprises and hopes that seemed too dazzling for realization. He ran quietly up the stairs, but not quietly enough to surprise the loved ones. Two pairs of sharp little ears were always on the alert after five o'clock, and before he had reached the door it was thrown open and the usual evening sight met his gaze, Arthur, with Dorothy in his arms holding her up for the first kiss, and mother in the background.

To-night, instead of letting Dorothy have the first greeting as had grown to be the custom, he reached over Arthur's shoulder and mother got the kiss; after that Baby and Arthur came in for theirs.

"Why did you kiss mother first?" asked Ar-

thur when they were all seated around the hearth.

"Because," answered father, "a kiss was all I brought her while I have picture books for you two in my overcoat pocket."

This announcement was followed by a rush for the hall.

When they were alone Walter drew his chair nearer to Clare's and began, "Dearest, things already begin to look brighter. That noisy encounter with Green, spectacular as some one called it to-day (though you know nothing was farther from my thoughts), has gotten out and the whole district is alive with it. I am really ashamed of the publicity of the matter. It is even in the papers this evening, but wait, I am coming to the point. You know John King, who was to get the appointment in our district to fill the unexpired term of poor old Judge Knox? Well, King died suddenly this morning and they must name some one in his place by noon to-morrow, or the whole business will go to the courts. You know my

ambition in that line and I let some of the district leaders know it to-day. You see the office seldom seeks the man in this great city of ours. Sweeny and Quinn seemed struck with the idea, and now that the district is singing my praises I have something to offer them in the way of a following. Tom should hear me talk now. He certainly would be satisfied with his brother-in-law. I am sure, however, that if the politicians were not in their present fix, they would not even consider me, but they have put up some very unpopular candidates and in our district there is a split in the organization and my present popularity may be of service in helping to heal the breach. Many of the lawyers have come to me and promised to get up a petition on my behalf and altogether things look pretty bright just now."

While he was speaking the door-bell rang and Walter opened to find a messenger with a letter for "Walter Lee, Esq."

After reading the note he passed it over to his wife saying:

"Better than I dared hope."

Then he seated himself at his desk and scribbled an answer, which the boy took and departed.

"Who is Horan?" asked Clare.

"Why, he is one of the leaders, indeed the one who has the Chieftain's ear."

"How detestable," exclaimed his wife, "that a man like you must dance attendance upon a man like him!"

Walter laughed. "He's not a bad sort; indeed he is above the average and a man I am glad to have on my side. He has always been friendly towards me since the night I found his son lying on a doorstep. The poor lad had taken too much, perhaps for the first time, and had I not assisted him home he might have been taken by the police. I did not know then who his father was, but the boy has never forgotten it. I doubt not it is he who has inspired this note. I believe the father adores him and spoils him most outrageously."

"Just like your own dear kind self," murmured his wife.

Walter pretended not to hear and went on to show how necessary it was to have the backing of such a man as this Horan and Clare listened and became convinced against her will.

After a hurried supper Walter started out upon his errand to the great man.

The children were very much disappointed that "father" had not stayed to see all the wonders of the new books. Of course, mother read until she was hoarse—but they had mother all day.

When Clare had read the last story in Dorothy's book, "Diamonds and Toads," by name, she closed the book and quietly looked at the children.

Arthur was buried in his father's easy chair and curled up beside him, her fair head on his shoulder, was Dorothy, fast asleep.

After the baby, as they still insisted upon

calling Dorothy, had been tucked into bed, Clare resumed her seat by the fire.

Arthur seemed lost in thought. "Mother," he asked slowly, his eyes still on the coals, "what is a stepmother, really?"

Clare tried to explain, adding that because the stepmother in "Diamonds and Toads" was cruel that did not mean that all stepmothers are cruel.

"You are my real mother, are you not?" he asked, looking quickly into her eyes. But, as was his habit, he hurried on without waiting for an answer. "I remember when I was very small I punched a boy for saying you were not my real mother. We must have been very poor once because I remember playing on a dirty street with dirty boys and one named Joe, and you were very sick and you went away and they said God had taken you. I never thought of these things before but to-night when you went away with Dorrie I saw it all in the coals. Don't you see it too? But

what is the matter?" In a moment he was by her chair, his arms about her neck.

"My precious," she whispered, and she pressed him tightly to her. Should she tell him to-night? He was so young. Why cast a cloud on his joy? Could she have but looked into the future that night she would have told him all; but she did what so many of us do, delayed the evil moment.

In his anxiety for her health the boy forgot his question, and not until he had bathed her head, which he insisted *must* ache, and made her comfortable on the couch would he consent to leave her.

He had not been gone long when Tom and Mabel "ran in" on the way home from a concert.

Clare put the question to them: "Should she have told him?"

Tom thought, "No, let well enough alone; lots of time yet." Mabel said, "Wait until he asks again."

None of them, being human, could look into the future and dream under what circumstances he would next ask the question.

It was long past midnight when Walter came in with the good news that Horan was ready and willing to exert all his influence in the young lawyer's behalf and assured him that within the next twenty-four hours he would know his fate.

"Thank God!" cried Clare impulsively, and her eyes, those eyes that spoke such volumes of faith and trust, were raised to the niche just over her husband's head, wherein reposed the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, and her husband knew that she was not trusting to blind fate. Her refuge, in joy or sorrow now, after years of wifehood and motherhood and poverty and anxiety, was the same as it had been in her sweet care-free girlhood.

His heart throbbed and he said within himself, "How could any man live with her and not be raised, even in spite of himself, at least a little way towards her standards!" She

never preached her faith and trust; she simply lived it, all unconscious of the power she possessed over those around her.

Arthur and Dorothy were the only ones in the household who slept that night; but all were cheerful and happy at breakfast time. Walter started off for the office with a lighter heart than had been his for many a long and weary year.

When he bade his wife good-by he had not failed to warn her not to be too hopeful, but that if anything good came he would phone to the near-by drugstore and Arthur could bring the message over at lunch-time.

When her husband had gone Clare thanked God she had so many duties to perform that she had little time to think, or rather fret. In spite of everything, however, the morning seemed eternal and several times she had almost yielded to the impulse to run over to the drugstore and so end the suspense.

Just when she had decided that she could not wait a minute longer a messenger appeared

with a note, the contents of which were: "Judge Lee sends his compliments to Mrs. Lee and will be home at five o'clock." Signed, "Walter."

Clare's first impulse was to fall on her knees in thanksgiving to God for this sudden good fortune, her second to sink into the solitary easy chair to build castles for the future; but the boisterous entrance of the children cut short any such luxury. She longed for some one to whom she could tell the good news.

When she did impart the joyful tidings to the children, Arthur's first question was,

"Will he bring more books?" and Dorothy chimed in, "No, a doll and carriage." And Clare realized that they were too young to understand anything about good fortune except what the world understands, and so she let their fancy have full play, and they returned to school building castles in which ponies and dolls, boats and automobiles, were hopelessly jumbled.

Clare spent the greater part of the after-

noon in preparing an especially fine dinner and decorating the table for the occasion. She took the greatest delight in being extravagant in small ways, such as ordering flowers for the table and a salad from the caterer. She was, by nature, the soul of generosity and the years of poverty and saving had been a greater trial to her than they would have been to many another woman.

Upon the children's arrival from school at three o'clock they announced that a brass band was coming to serenade father and that there would be fire-works and "everything" and they were so delighted at the prospect of the importance and prominence that this was to bring *them* that they quite forgot the doll, the ponies, etc. They were wild with impatience for the night, not because they wanted to see their father, but because they had heard that the band would not come until after dark.

On the stroke of five the well-known step sounded on the stairs and in the mad rush mother far outstripped the children. She

threw open the door and Walter folded her in his arms. Not a word passed between them and the children stood by awed. They had rushed forward in a frenzy of delight but this quiet greeting made them feel, as Arthur afterwards tried to express it, "as if they were in church." They stood together holding each other's hands and gazing awe-stricken upon this unusual scene.

Father now turned towards them and opened his arms for the big bear hug in which he insisted he could include all three.

There was a mad dash and the merry childish voices added the crowning joy to that happy evening.

Well, the band came and there were fireworks and speeches and that poor shabby flat had the proudest night of its life.

When it was all over and husband and wife were at last alone, they began to devise plans for the future.

"We can have a comfortable home and the children can attend better schools," declared

Clare, her eyes brightening at the prospect of moving at last from this noisy neighborhood. "And you, dear," she went on, "will be doing at last your life work, or is this *the* Judgeship?"

"Time only can tell," answered Walter, a shadow passing over his face; but Clare did not see and hurried on.

"Hitch your chariot to a star," quoted she with one of those quick challenging glances.

He was not always able to follow her flights, those flights that he compared to the skylark's. At such times he simply waited, for he knew she must come to earth again, or at least as near it as she could come.

"We will be content for the present, dear," he answered. "None of us can plan too far into the future."

Clare rested her head on his shoulder with a deep sigh of contentment.

"Thank God!" she murmured. "I have you to bring me down out of the clouds. You always make the descent quite easy."

CHAPTER IV

A SLEEPLESS night and the day of excitement had been too much for Clare, and she was hardly in bed before she fell into a profound sleep of exhaustion. Her husband, however, was too much excited for sleep. He had been through a trying ordeal and he had won the prize. No one, not even his wife, knew what that prize really meant to him. The goal of his boyish ambition had been a judgeship that would teach the world mercy as well as justice, a judgeship that would get behind the crime and discover the motive and so mete out punishment. To-day he felt *this* was *the* judgeship. Where could he serve the people best who needed him most but in the Court where their cases usually end for better or worse? And, after all, had it not been the poor that he had always meant to help? The

rich are much better able to obtain a hearing, if not in one court, why then in another.

And Clare! Had not this also been her idea? And yet that question, "Or is *this the* judgeship?" had struck a discordant note. He knew she was ambitious and yet was she disappointed because he did not aim higher? He knew to-night that in his heart he did *not* want to go any higher. His life work seemed mapped out before him with absolute accuracy and precision. He felt almost ashamed to acknowledge this to Clare and yet why he did not know. Before going to bed she had exacted a promise that he would not work a moment after twelve. Well, he had kept his promise; but it was now nearly two and he was still too restless for bed. He put out his light and tried her prescription—of seeking rest and peace from the stars.

As he looked he thought he was a boy again and the old ideals, the boyish dreams, even to-night, did not seem foolish or impossible of realization. His heart was just as responsive

to-night to the cry for mercy as it had been in his school-days when he had taken long walks through the dear familiar woods along the banks of the Hudson, the river of his love and of Clare's, for indeed he could never think of the river without thinking of her. He had, in those days, seldom let any one into his confidence. He had, now and then, let Clare, the happy carefree girl companion, have an inkling of what was passing in his mind and she had even been as responsive as the boy could wish. But he had not told all his dreams; he had not always been sure that even she would understand. Since his marriage and until to-day he had broken down the barrier, he had thought, forever; but, "Is *this* the judge-ship?" had again erected an invisible barrier and struggle against it as he would he could not deny its existence, and he felt that a long walk in the woods was again necessary to cool his blood and calm down his disappointment.

"Three o'clock and you not in bed yet?"

Walter started like a guilty child and al-

lowed himself to be led away to bed. In his dreams he visited again the old home on the Hudson and he and she were just boy and girl again, dreaming and doing, for neither had ever been content with merely dreaming. And the river air blew on his forehead, and it was so cool and refreshing that he woke up like a new man and could not believe he had been dreaming.

It is hard, sometimes very hard, for men, even for the gentlest and best of them, to thoroughly understand a woman, and doubtless the same rule works the other way.

Clare in her heart thought as her husband did; but she had the bad habit, or the unfortunate habit, of expressing the random thoughts that rushed through her brain. Walter, being a man, did not know how to discriminate, could not always tell which she meant and which she did not mean. He could not understand the rapid workings of her mind and the impulse a woman frequently has to express an opinion simply to be contra-

dicted. "Hitch your chariot to a star," had been a favorite quotation of hers, and she had used it to-night as a sort of challenge to him to be the star to guide her. She felt that he had within him the makings of a great man, and she wanted to know what he thought, confident that his decision would be hers also. All through their married life each had looked up to the other for strength and guidance, and, whereas Clare felt that she was the weaker vessel, she would have been surprised to discover that Walter attributed all that was best in him to her, and he would have been astonished to learn that she leaned on his strength and looked to him for guidance.

The morning papers announced, with flaring headlines, the important fact, that Walter S. Lee had been appointed magistrate for the — District to fill the unexpired term of Justice Knox. Then followed a more or less distorted review of the new magistrate's encounter with the railroad agent. He was described as the youngest magistrate who had

ever occupied the bench in New York, and one of whom great things were expected. The story of the first case he had pleaded in court was appended. It was in Judge Knox's Court and the judge had predicted that that young man would yet make his mark, a mark of an enduring character.

It was just after Walter's marriage and before misfortune had overtaken them. He was crossing 14th Street at — Avenue, when he passed a man whose large gaunt frame and worn, hunted expression caused the young man to turn and look after him. Impulse said, "Go back and speak with him," but he resisted and had proceeded on his way only a few steps when he noticed the busy pedestrians stopping and gazing across the street. He followed the crowd and found that a policeman had arrested the strange man he had just passed. Walter walked up to the officer and asked, "What was the trouble?"

"Thief," was the laconic answer.

People in the crowd volunteered the infor-

mation that the man had been caught purloining two apples from a fruit market.

"The man is hungry," said the young lawyer. "Let me pay the fine and let him go."

The policeman eyed the young man suspiciously, then answered:

"I'm attending to my business. It's the judge you will have to see."

Walter knew that the man was right and in his heart cursed the red tape that obliges a man to become a machine and judge only by what he sees. However, he kept pace with the pair. When they neared the station-house the officer remarked:

"I guess you're all right about his being hungry; but I saw him take the apples and it's not my business to ask why he did it."

The Sergeant at the desk also looked at Walter suspiciously and when the young lawyer asked the prisoner if he might take his case, assuring him that it would be no expense to him, the sergeant's smile became even more offensive.

Walter, however, kept his temper and accompanied the man to his cell where, after a great deal of difficulty, he won the prisoner's confidence and heard one of the saddest stories of want and suffering. No work for months, a wife and six small children, two of whom were very ill, no food, no fire, a dread and hatred of charity organizations, etc. A heart-rending story, which is only too common in this great prosperous city of ours. The man was actually dying of starvation and his family were not far removed from the same state.

When the interview was over, and the man, John Campbell, by name, had been assured that his family would be immediately cared for and his own case looked after, Walter started for the door. He intended, first of all, visiting an adjoining restaurant and sending in a substantial meal to the prisoner; but the very officer who had arrested poor Campbell had forestalled him and was, at that very moment, himself bearing a huge tray of edibles

to the hungry man. So the red tape had not penetrated beyond the blue uniform and the heart had refused to be made a part of the machine.

The young lawyer hurried home to secure his wife's advice and assistance. Although it was now quite late she insisted upon accompanying him to the Campbell home.

No need to describe the sad sights that met their gaze. The poor mother had heard of her husband's arrest—bad news always travels quickly—but Walter assured her that no judge would punish a starving man, and his hope was so contagious that when the visitors left joy and peace remained. A doctor and a nurse were soon after ushered in and all necessary steps taken for the recovery of the two children.

The following morning, when the case came up before Judge Knox, the young lawyer put the facts before the Court so clearly and forcibly and at the same time so pathetically that when he had finished there was not a dry

eye in the room; even the big policeman had to blow his nose audibly to hide his emotion.

The man was dismissed and the judge, a white-haired old man, turned to Walter and said:

"I understand this is your first case. I congratulate you on your conduct of it. Young man, you have a future. In a few years I will be gone, then may God or (with a wan smile) the politicians put you in my place. These people need you."

Was it a prophecy! Strange to say, it was the vacancy caused by the death of the old judge that Walter had now been appointed to fill.

As for John Campbell—the very man from whom he had stolen, moved by the young attorney's eloquence, came forward in Court and offered employment to Campbell as driver of one of his wagons.

A great cheer went up from the courtroom at this magnanimous offer. Few realized all it meant to the prisoner. It not only meant

steady work for him, but it also meant that he had not been branded as a thief, and it gave to the market-man the most faithful and devoted employee, as the succeeding years proved.

This case had determined Walter Lee's vocation. Henceforth he cast in his lot with the poor for better or worse. He was their champion. He was not always successful, and time, energy, and brain-power were very often expended with very little result; however, faith and the hope of youth, and a good wife, he would have added, had helped him, and now he had attained the long desired goal, *the* judgeship. True, he was only a city magistrate, but it was not the title he had wanted; it was the power with which the office invested him for which he longed, the power to temper justice with mercy. Added to this was a great peace of mind, for Clare and the children would at length have the ordinary comforts of life. . . .

All was now bustle and excitement in the little flat. Carpets were torn up and curtains

and pictures were down, boxes and hampers were here, there, and everywhere.

Dorothy danced about the rooms in delight. Change is so dear to the heart of a child, and it was moving day.

Arthur looked quite serious and important as he moved here and there helping the men and actually directing the work. Clare watched him with amusement and admiration mixed. He was a born leader, that she had known long ago, but his power of organization was developing in bounds. He was so quiet and sure in all his plans; even grown men listened to him and did as he suggested—or was it suggestion? To her it sounded more like commands. Though it amused her the men seemed to take it seriously and she had to acknowledge that the boy was really guided by a plan and that there was reason and judgment in everything he did.

In the midst of this chaos she sat in a rocker, just as Arthur had told her to do, calmly watching the work that an hour before she had

thought that she and only she could superintend.

Walter was receiving the furniture at the new house and she was supposed to be directing affairs at the flat, though she realized now that it was Arthur who was at the helm.

As she sat there she thought of many things, principally incidents of Arthur's childhood. He was blooming into a fine manly boy. Honesty and fairness were his characteristics; in this he was like Walter; but, except for his gentleness and chivalry to the weaker sex, he and Walter had nothing in common. Of course, they both had magnetism, but even this was of a different order. Boys followed Arthur blindly, never asking a reason. His word was law, he imposed his authority relentlessly and they never resisted but took it all for granted. Walter, on the other hand, dreaded anything like a blind following and ever avoided making his authority felt. He was diffident and shunned praise. He was reasonable above all things.

Arthur, on the contrary, was fond of praise and very sensitive to blame and, she very much feared, loved power for its own sake. Of course, he was still a very small boy, really only thirteen years old, and the years would improve him and his sense of justice would always be a safeguard. Perhaps, she argued, he would be more like Walter as the years went on; but when she thought of her husband as a boy, she felt that he had changed very little. He had never been over anxious to shine as a leader, yet she remembered how they had always looked to him in perplexity. He had a way of helping people out of difficult places that was all his own. His quiet strength and surety of what he felt was right was, she knew, what they had depended upon. Arthur's ringing laugh and physical prowess had made him an idol among his school fellows, and his justice and honesty in his dealings with all had made him admired wherever he went. At school classmates and teachers spoiled him, at home Dorothy looked up to him as a god, and

it was hard for Clare and Walter not to join the adoring crowd, which they did indeed in their hearts.

Only one thing about him made Clare uneasy; it was his utter repulsion for the poor and ragged. He really fought against it; but it was something that seemed to over-master him, and when Clare spoke of it to him and told him how very unlike his father it made him, he had answered,

"I know it, but he and I are so very unlike in so many ways that I can hardly believe I am a real son to either of you."

At this Clare had quickly taken alarm and so changed the subject.

A little scene that she had come upon in the street only a year before recurred to her to-day, and it made her feel that, however hard he might be in this respect, he would never be unjust. Mercy tempering justice might come later.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon and a group of boys were frolicking along one

of the principal avenues on their way home from school. Ring Leader of all the fun was Arthur. As they neared the corner of West Street they came upon a poor unfortunate woman who was very heavily under the influence of liquor. Some of the boys began to jeer at her and make fun of her. One of them, a weak, miserable looking boy, hung back from his companions and seemed to be seeking an avenue of escape. Arthur gazed at the woman with disgust, then back at the straggler.

"Shut up, you fellows," he cried, "and Jim Barton why don't you be a man and help her home. A nice way for a fellow to treat his mother. You are a coward, you are! Come, fellows."

And the others did as he ordered them, even poor Jim, whose young life was shadowed by such a heavy cross.

Clare watched the poor boy assist his mother, for his mother she was, across the street and into a shabby apartment. Her heart went out to that miserable stunted boy,

but it was clearly a case in which she could not interfere. Arthur had not, she knew, given his order out of pity for the woman. It was his sense of justice that had prompted him to command the son to care for his mother; but he had no pity for the son and no understanding of what the disgrace meant for him. It was useless, she could not mold him as she would. Time and trouble, she knew in her heart, were the only things that could change him, and she shrank from the knowledge.

CHAPTER V

WHEN they were once more settled in their new house and when Walter had been initiated into his new duties, plans were made to send Arthur to boarding-school. It would be a great sacrifice, but he needed the free open life of the country and, after all, the college was not so far away. He wanted to go and entered into all the plans with enthusiasm.

Dorothy was heartbroken at the thought of a separation, but when Arthur promised to write letters just for herself alone she became reconciled.

During the six years that followed Arthur distinguished himself, for he was not only a good student, but a remarkable speaker and was put forward on any and every occasion. The world seemed to conspire to spoil him.

He certainly had a triumphantly happy boyhood and youth. There was a haunting fear in Clare's heart that there would come a change in the tide some day, and how would he be prepared to meet it? What would come to the surface—the best or—— But she refused to encourage gloomy forebodings.

On his graduation day he carried everything before him, was the honor man and the orator of the day. Despite all the praise and admiration he was singularly unspoiled, grateful for all congratulation and anxious to minimize his triumphs.

Dorothy was now fourteen and a very stately, dignified young lady, so she thought. She was proud to be escorted over the campus by Arthur's friends and treated as "a real grown-up lady," as she later confided to several of her girl friends.

Walter stood a little apart from the others when the exercises were over and there was a far-away look in those kind brown eyes. Six years as a city magistrate had left their mark

on that quiet face. A single morning spent in one of these courts sends one home sick at heart, but what of six years of such mornings! To mete out justice tempered with mercy and still keep within the letter of the law, he found much harder than it sounds. They had been six years of storm and stress, for the consciousness of doing what is right "as God gives us to see the right," as Lincoln would put it, does not prevent mental suffering and can not always conquer the human sensitiveness to injustice and harsh, unrelenting criticism.

Of these things Judge Lee had suffered his share and, poor Clare felt, much more than his share. His motives had been attacked and he had been accused of bidding for popular favor, of being ambitious and of having his eye upon something much higher than city magistrate. Base insinuations and ulterior motives were ever on some men's lips and in the editorials of certain dailies; he was even accused of trying to break down the laws of the land. Amidst the sorrow that all this criticism brought upon

them Walter never wavered in his course, and the respect and love and trust of the poor he counted as his compensation.

Clare felt each unkind word uttered or printed against her husband as so many arrows in her own heart. "Why could they not let him alone! A man like him, one in a thousand, yes one in ten thousand! The soul of honor and infinitely patient with others!"

As for Arthur, when he chanced to come upon any of these attacks his hot blood made him wish to go for the editor in true Southern style.

"Remember, dear, they are only words," Clare would urge, arguing with herself that words could never hurt. But the argument never worked with either of them.

"If there were even a bit of truth in them," he would argue. "Mother, how is it that there is so much injustice in the world? Why do people always want to believe the worst of other people?"

"Oh, it is a bad habit," she had answered.

"Some people can not understand a good man; that is all."

Young as Dorothy was she too had heard some of the criticisms, but being a very diffident child she had not showed what she felt, like her impetuous brother. She never spoke of it at all to her mother. She instinctively felt that it was too painful a subject and that her mother would try to make light of it. Dorothy's solace was to put on her hat and go down to the little chapel around the corner to One who knew all, to whom she did not need to tell anything. There she could pour out her heart and quiet the rebellious feelings that would arise in spite of herself.

On more than one occasion as she turned to leave the church she had discovered her mother in one of the last pews, and they had walked home together and had talked of everything but the subject that was nearest each heart.

As the years went on the criticisms grew less caustic. People began to get interested in Judge Lee's queer sentences. A Western

paper gave an account of a morning in Lee's court and rehearsed a typical case. As the paper was a very influential one the eyes of the philanthropical world, at least, were turned to the New York judge who had sentenced a man to take his wife out in the evenings and to spend his money in the ten cent store. Of course every one wanted to hear the story and soon it flew like wildfire, and even New York became interested and the very papers that formerly laughed at him soon begged for interviews. Truly the tide was turning. Walter watched the turn with dismay. Hard as the criticisms had been this promised to be worse. A freak judge and a freak court were not what he had aimed at. Surely the world seemed bound to misunderstand; however he knew that with time the fad would pass—truth would triumph.

The case that had attracted such wide attention through the Western paper's article was not strange or unusual in a city court and the sentence only one of many that the papers

had hitherto poked fun at or had sharply criticized. Briefly it was this: A certain man by the name of Smith had been charged with intoxication. It was the second offense and the prisoner did not look for clemency and did not really seem to care.

"Is this the first offense?" asked the judge.

"No, your honor, the second."

"Tell me all about it," said the judge.

"When did you first begin to drink?"

"God only knows that," answered the man.

"My parents both drank and they used to give it to me to keep me quiet. Why, when I was not more than five years old they used to find me dead drunk in the gutter. I grew up somehow and became a blacksmith and then a good girl came along. Well, we got married and she tried to keep me straight and for five years I was pretty good, but then the babies came, three of them, and there was sickness and babies crying all the time and my wife sickly and cross, and home was not much good in the evenings. Then I began to spend the

evenings in saloons and so forget things and—and—here I am, and it's hard on her," and the man's voice broke.

"Yes," said the judge, "it is hard on her, with three babies and ill health; but tell me, as man to man, would it not be the worst of punishments to you to see your little babies experience the unhappy childhood that was yours? Would you not sacrifice everything rather than have them condemned to that? You have had a hard lot and have inherited tastes that are hard to fight, no one can tell *how* hard but yourself. But surely you don't want to pass this curse on! Your parents did not care; but I know you *do* care. If you will be merciful to your children and your poor wife I will be merciful to you. Go home and fight a good fight. You have everything to gain. Take your wife out occasionally in the evenings. A cheap moving-picture show you can afford as well as a drink and she will enjoy it. She needs recreation as well as you do. When you feel a nickel burning in your

pocket, don't buy a drink, buy her a little present, etc."

It certainly was a queer sentence, but it was justice tempered with mercy, and it saved the man instead of driving him to despair.

Why this particular case had been made so much of neither Clare nor Walter could understand, for to them it had been one of the simplest and most insignificant cases with which he had had to deal. However, now that the great philanthropic world had begun to take notice, a great load had been lifted from the judge's shoulders. The great problem hitherto had been to find work for the so-called "criminal." How many crimes grow out of idleness and the despair that follows days and weeks and months of vainly looking for work, few of us realize.

Walter knew that if the women, in any large numbers, became interested in finding work for these idle men much would be gained, for women have a way of accomplishing things in spite of difficulties; certainly Clare had, and

women in general, he knew, have a genius that way and are far more resourceful than men.

On this particular June day all the world seemed glad, and as the judge looked at Arthur, the joyous June day personified, he wondered what the future would bring forth. Arthur had decided to study law. It was the ladder, he had announced, by which the American man rises to eminence. Walter thought of Clare's favorite quotation, "Hitch your chariot to a star." Surely it was Arthur's also. At times he seemed a full son of hers—but the cold light that now and again appeared in his eyes, that certainly was not hers. Time and again the judge and his wife had discussed the influences of heredity and environment. He had always contended that heredity was blamed too much for the crimes of men and asserted that environment has far greater influence upon the formation of character.

And yet, here was Arthur, living under the constant influence and inspiration of such a foster-mother as few boys have the good for-

tune to possess, and he was still hard and unforgiving and most uncompromising toward so many of the poor and neglected. The divine spark of mercy would not light in his heart, that heart that was otherwise so warm and loving. At home he was affectionate and lovable and to his friends always loyal and faithful, but for the weak and erring, for the poor, he had no place in his heart. In the years before experience had ripened his wisdom Walter had been outspoken in his condemnation of the prophet who could not be a prophet in his own country, the reformer whose followers were counted by the hundreds and yet who failed to influence those nearest and dearest to him, those who he had contended *must* know him best. It was humiliating to have to acknowledge that he was himself one of those despised prophets, another such reformer. Yes, so far in this respect he was a failure and if it were not for his belief and trust in the ultimate triumph of Clare's faith in the boy he would, indeed, have been sorely discour-

aged. But that she, who was his second self, would succeed in the end he never for a moment doubted. All his hope was centered not in the prophet, but in the prophet's wife. Her triumph would be his triumph.

To-day he felt that he was perhaps making a mistake in attributing too much to environment and too little to heredity. After all a little truth might help to solve the problem. At any rate it was the boy's right to know. "To-morrow," he promised himself; but alas! to-morrow he was back again buried in court cases and lost to the little world about his fire-side.

Aunt Alice and Uncle Jack Barnard had planned a trip to Europe as a graduating present for their favorite nephew. Arthur was delighted at the prospect of travel and gladly put off entering a law school for another twelve months.

Dorothy also was invited; but though in her heart she longed to go she knew how very lonely her mother would be, for father had so

little time lately to spend with her, and Dorothy knew that her mother had begun to depend a great deal on her daughter's companionship. She did not for a moment, however, let her mother dream what a sacrifice it was to stay, and every one thought she had declined because she was nervous about the ocean trip, whereas she would, in reality, have loved it above all things. She fought the battle out alone in her own room with only Gypsie for company.

"They think I don't care," she said as she stood her pet on her lap and held him tightly by the front paws. "They think I am *afraid!* Afraid of the beautiful blue ocean and—and—O Gypsie! they don't understand. "To yield with such a happy art that no one thinks you care!" People call that beautiful, but I don't. I call it terrible and horrible, and if I don't run downstairs this minute and tell them that I *do care* and care awfully I don't know how I can stand it. And if I *do*, oh Gypsie, every one will be unhappy and poor me most of all."

Gypsie nodded his head and gave a little bark of encouragement and made a bound for Dorothy's nose.

"Gyp! Gyp!" she moaned, "why are you so happy when I am so unhappy? I always thought you did not have much heart but now——"

Dorothy had been sitting with her back to the door and had not heard it open and before she knew it her mother was on the couch beside her.

"My poor, brave daughter!" In that dear voice was too much for the girl and she broke down completely. After the storm had subsided they had a quiet talk.

"Don't you see, mother," she explained, "it is this way: If I went I would only be miserable about you and your loneliness, so I really would not enjoy a moment. You see it is really just as selfish for me to stay home as that is the only thing that could relieve the misery in my heart."

"But you have not gone, so what can you tell

of that 'misery' in your heart?" asked her mother smiling.

"Please, please do not ask me to go now. You have discovered my secret, but you wormed it out of me and so don't take advantage. Why did you not leave me to fight it out alone?"

"Because," answered Clare, "it is not healthy for a girl not to have a sister. She needs one for a safety-valve, if not for anything else. Don't you know, dear, that nursed and secret sorrows grow in the dark, whereas a little light often makes them fade away?"

"That is really what your sympathy has done for mine," answered the girl. "I wonder now I ever even wanted to go without you. I would be miserably unhappy. I am not at all the martyr I thought I was. Don't you believe me, mother?"

"Of course, darling. Now wipe away the tears and let us go out for a little walk."

CHAPTER VI

ARTHUR's one year in Europe had lengthened out to two. The boy had an infinite capacity for enjoyment and, like the rest of his life hitherto, everything had gone his way. Aunt Alice wrote, "I don't believe I shall ever want to bring him back. But there is one thing, Clare, I must tell you. He met a young girl on the steamer going over named Marie Dumont, with whom he has fallen madly in love. Of course it is only calf love, for what is he but a boy! Still I wanted to warn you, and if you wish him to come home sooner on that account just say so. We leave here in October at the latest."

It was now June and Clare thought long and deeply over the letter. She and Walter finally decided to let matters drift, trusting to the boy's good sense and lack of the means to support a wife.

During the two years that Arthur had been abroad the world had not stood still. The moment of reckoning had arrived, the day on which Judge Lee *must* cross the Rubicon. For eight long years he had dreaded this moment, had hoped against hope that the even tenor of his magistrate days might never be disturbed, that nothing would ever loom upon the horizon that might again raise the question, "Or is *this* the judgeship?" After many years' experience the justice of his decision that *this* was *the* judgeship had become more and more apparent. He *knew* that *it was* and nothing would ever tempt him higher. But Clare! Was the prophet's wife tired of this humdrum life and did she still want the prophet to "Hitch his chariot to a star?" He ever avoided the question with her and from the unflagging interest she took in all his work he could not really believe that she was growing cold in her enthusiasm and yet—and yet—— She was ambitious and her eyes were ever raised to the stars.

A committee from the New York Bar approached him to help them out, as the choice of the politicians for Judge of the Supreme Court was this year a man whom the members of the Bar could not endorse. The committee urged Judge Lee to accept their endorsement for the nomination.

Walter braced himself for a battle. In this trial he feared he stood alone. No one would be able to understand his answer, not even Clare, he thought sadly. These thoughts rushed through the judge's brain while the men waited for an answer. He sat at his desk toying with a paper-cutter. At length he raised his eyes and, looking straight into the spokesman's eyes, gave his answer.

"Gentlemen, I am deeply grateful for the honor you have done me this morning, and the memory that I have been offered this endorsement by the New York Bar will always be a consolation to me; but I regret that in justice to myself and my people I can not accept. My place is here on the magistrate's bench.

Other, wiser men could do my work, but no man knows the people in this district as I do. It took me years to reach the understanding that now is mine, and, before God, I think it is my duty to stay where I am. You will find many abler men for the Supreme Court."

The men rose, and after each had wrung the judge's hand they departed without a word. They could not understand him, yet they respected him, as most men did. They were disappointed but not sorely so, for they knew that many able and learned men were clamoring for the position.

After the committee had left him Walter took his place on the bench and the day's work soon drove the thought of the Supreme Court out of his head. It was not until he turned his steps homeward that he again thought of the morning. He dreaded telling his wife as he knew that if she were disappointed he could not fail to read it in her face, try as she might to hide it. "Is this *the* judgeship?" In the tone she had asked it in on that night, now so

long ago, it seemed to haunt him and echo and re-echo in his ears with increasing persistency at every step he took.

His hand trembled as he turned the key in the latch, a sensation he had never before experienced in all his married life. Heretofore, he had always been sure of what she would think and to-day, for the first time, he was uncertain. What if to-day something should come between them! He had not even waited to consult her before giving his answer. Would she feel that his act showed a lack of trust in her?

Clare met him in the hall and helped him off with his coat.

"Why, dear, you are as pale as a ghost!" she cried. "That court will be the death of you yet!"

"Don't, don't make it any harder!" Walter groaned in a tone so unlike himself that his wife felt her strength suddenly leaving her, and she leaned against the wall for support, the gray eyes a sea of sorrow.

"Dear Walter," she faltered, "no trouble is too great if we share it. It is only suspense that kills."

With his arm around her he led her down the hall to the cushioned window-seat. "Clare," he began in a sad dejected tone, "I have to-day thrown away an honor. I have refused the nomination for Supreme Court judge. I could not leave my people, my life work. I——"

He was not looking at her as he feared to read disapproval in those dear eyes. She had grown still, ominously still.

"Dear little wife," he cried beside himself with grief, "if you are so very unhappy I will reconsider it, I will. Oh, if you only understood!"

"Understood!" cried Clare, springing to her feet. "Walter Lee, have you lived with me all these years for nothing? Oh, you have never, never known me," she moaned, sinking down again among the cushions, her eyes averted. The grief in her voice seemed too deep for

tears. If she had broken down and treated him to a tearful scene, as many another woman in her place would have done, he might have known better what to do. Coaxing and soothing heal such wounds. Her very strength spoke the depth of her grief. It disarmed him completely. Could mere disappointment over a rejected honor go so deep? No, he told himself, assuredly no. He had hurt her, perhaps, mortally in some way. He was stunned. Could it be that he had misunderstood her, that he had wronged her? Oh, the mingled joy and agony of that thought! After all, could it be that she thought him *right*?

"Walter," she broke in, and the depth of sadness in her voice cut him to the heart, "must I tell you in words, that I would have despised you had you accepted that nomination, or had you even given it a moment's consideration? My idol would have fallen. I thought," and there was a catch in her voice, "that we *both* understood what *the* judgeship meant."

Then it was true! He *had* wronged her!

In a moment he was beside her, humble and penitent, pouring out the story of the last eight years, those years that had followed the question, "Or is *this the* judgeship?" and, "Hitch your chariot to a star."

When he had finished she caught the dear face in her hands and looking into those deep brown eyes said: "How could you so misunderstand me! and yet I don't wonder, for often I can not understand myself. I am ambitious; I was terribly so at school; I loved to come first and to win the principal medals; and for you nothing to me seems impossible; your abilities seem great enough for the highest post of honor and responsibility, but long ago, in fact on the very night and at the very moment I struck the jarring cord, I *had* decided that *this was the* judgeship. I do not know how I came to say 'hitch your chariot to a star.' It might have been the 'last kick,' as Arthur would say of my old worldly ambition. Since that night I have never been tempted again. However, I must acknowledge that

had you told me the nomination had been offered you and you had not given your decision, I would have had a dream of my own dear gifted husband in the most honorable position his profession can offer and of myself as his wife. Oh, it would have come and I would have let it come, for I would know I had the strength to let it go, just as we burned Green's letter in the old days. No, no, don't say you are sorry again. I gave you enough reason to doubt my feelings. Let it end here, dear. I hear the bell; some of your people, I suppose. How their eyes would haunt me if I were Mrs. Supreme Court Judge!" she added with one of her mischievous glances.

And, in spite of himself, Walter could not resist a smile.

"There now," she cried, "you look like yourself again. Go, the man is waiting."

He left her reluctantly and returned in a moment to announce that he was obliged to go downtown with his visitor.

The dinner was on the table. Dorothy was

away for the night and Clare knew that she would have a lonesome meal and a long evening; but she smiled brightly into her husband's face and said:

"It is too bad, but you know best. Good-by and be sure to get something downtown."

When he had gone she forced herself to take a cup of tea and then retired to her cozy sitting-room and closed the door; not that there was any one to disturb her, but for the feeling it gave of security from interruption. After all, it was good to be alone for a few hours and she had so much to think about. She was not morbid nor given to self analysis, but to-night she wanted to fight the battle out in her own heart, knowing full well that this was the only road to peace. She did not for a moment blame him for doubting her feelings on this vital subject, especially after he had reminded her of her own words on that memorable night. It really was no wonder he had feared her decision and yet she would not have been a woman had the thought not come into her head,

"He should have trusted me; he should have known me after so many years." But she resolutely put these thoughts away. She remembered how, when she was a school girl, she had longed for a friend, some one who would feel for her and understand her perfectly. Surely in the years that had gone by her husband had come nearer to that standard of a friend than she had ever dreamed of any one's coming; yet even he had not understood this time.

"It is impossible," she concluded; "two human beings can not understand each other perfectly; nothing perfect does exist on earth."

When Walter came home late that night, what promised to be the saddest day of their married life ended, as he expressed it, in "an understanding that passed all understandings." The mist that had obscured his sun so long was gone forever, dispelled by the most brilliant sunrise of his life.

CHAPTER VII

WHEN Dorothy returned from school the following afternoon the mother could not keep the news until the daughter had removed her wraps and she burst out with:

"They have offered father the Supreme Court judgeship." That was all she said; and she studied her daughter's face.

The brown eyes, so like her father's, opened wider, but she only answered,

"Well!"

"Well!" echoed her mother exasperated. "What a girl you are! Do you for a moment know what it means?"

"Yes," answered Dorothy quietly. "It means that he would have to leave his people and that, of course, he would never do."

"You certainly are your father's daughter," exclaimed her mother impulsively and with a note of disappointment in her voice; for, of all

things, Clare loved a dramatic climax and it took the spice out of the news when she found that Dorothy took it for granted that her father would reject the offer. At the moment she longed for Arthur for, after all, she loved opposition and startled surprise.

Dorothy misunderstood the source of her mother's disappointment, and holding her chin very high in the air (this at least she had taken from her mother) announced, "I am proud of being my father's daughter," and immediately left the room.

The mother understood that the daughter was on the point of breaking down and, again like her father, she showed the white feather rather than exhibit her feelings.

After this little scene the mother's heart went out to her child and Clare came to the conclusion that Dorothy needed more young companionship. She loved this only daughter madly and perhaps, she thought, selfishly, and kept her too much in her own society and that was not a normal life for a young girl.

Several of Dorothy's classmates, her cousin Mabel among the number, were, in September, to be enrolled as students at the dear old Convent on the Hudson, Clare's own Alma Mater. The mother knew that her daughter, in her heart, longed to accompany her friends but was too unselfish to mention the fact.

Clare now determined that Dorothy should go. Arthur would be home in October and, after all, she could see her "girlie" twice a week. "Yes," she told herself, "selfish love is not the true love."

Half an hour later Dorothy returned to say she was sorry for the abruptness of her departure.

"Don't you know dear," declared her mother, "that there is no one I could more wish you to be like than your father? He is far and away above me, daughter dear; but there, do not let us talk of it any more. I have a plan. You are going to St. Jerome's in September. No, no, I have decided, and I shall have Arthur back and——"

But Dorothy was crying, Dorothy, who always showed such a brave front!

"Don't you want to go, dear?" questioned her mother quietly, and between the sobs Clare made out that her daughter's heart was broken because her secret sorrow had been unearthed. She did not dream that her mother knew that she really longed to go and, truth to tell, Clare's clear intuition, not any word or action of the girl's, had surmised the secret.

That night father and mother talked it over for more than an hour. He fully realized all it meant to his wife, whose power of loving was as deep and full as her own nature. He made only tentative objections, for he knew that when it came to making a sacrifice that she felt to be necessary, with Clare there was no looking back or indulging in useless regrets.

"Could she not get as good an education in a day school?" he asked by way of argument.

"No, no; you don't understand. It is the

atmosphere, the something indescribable that never leaves you all through life."

"Well," he rejoined, "if boarding-school had anything to do with helping you to be what you are, then send her by all means."

Clare had to laugh at his unusually strong language.

Like his wife, Walter was a strong believer in that doctrine of Froebel's, that the child who lives out his life naturally, normally, stage by stage, neither prolonging nor hurrying the stages, is the child who will attain a perfect development. That Dorothy was becoming grave and thoughtful beyond her years, he had of late noticed on more than one occasion. Now he understood the cause; she was repressing herself unnecessarily. "To yield with such a happy art that no one thinks you care," may be very well for grown-up saints, but for children—and Dorothy, he felt, was really still a child, it was forcing nature. The girl would grow up morbid if she began so early to re-

nounce her healthy, natural desires. There was not the slightest fear of her becoming selfish. As her mother expressed it, "There was not a selfish bone in her body."

The sea air was prescribed as a tonic for Dorothy's state of mind. So the summer passed in a cottage by the sea. They were all lovers of the sea, Clare passionately fond of the ever-changing yet changeless scene. Aunt Mabel had taken the adjoining cottage and Mabel, Tom, and Frank provided young companions for Dorothy. They all decided that it promised to be an ideally joyous summer.

One morning in the beginning of August Mabel came running over to Dorothy, breathless.

"Guess what!" she cried. "Mother has asked that old Dr. Joe down for a couple of weeks. I just *hate* him. He is so serious and so cracked about music, your kind, not mine. I am sure I don't know what we will do with him. It was so nice here and now he is going to spoil it all!"

"Dr. Joe," repeated Dorothy slowly. "Oh, yes, now I remember him. I heard him sing once at your house. It was a sad song and I cried like a baby. Though I tried to hide the tears he noticed them and immediately began to sing a funny song about a fisherman. You and the boys enjoyed it and laughed, but I was mad at him and thought I would never speak to him again. I wonder what he is really like!"

"Well, you will find out pretty soon," rejoined Mabel, "for he is coming and we have got to make the best of it. I hope he will bring his banjo. He is in a cripple hospital and I believe the youngsters are wild about him. He plays the banjo for them and sings funny songs and does all kinds of stunts till they are nearly in convulsions. Queer, he is not a bit like that with us! You would think butter would not melt in his mouth."

After Mabel had gone Dorothy thought over the conversation and wondered if she would like this "Dr. Joe." If the children loved

him surely there must be something very likable about him, for they seldom are mistaken. She remembered hearing her mother and Aunt Mabel talking about him a few days ago. Aunt Mabel had said Joe was working too hard, and one of the doctors at the hospital had advised him to take a rest, and she knew he had very little means to take a holiday, so she was going to ask him down to visit her. She knew, however, that he would not come unless he knew he would be of use in some way. "I have told him that we are nervous about your being so far from a physician and want him to be near you for at least a few weeks. I feel sure he will fall into the trap."

Clare smiled. "Mabel, dear, you have not changed a bit. You will always find a way to do a good deed. I will be glad to see dear little Joe, for as such I always think of him."

At the time Dorothy had not paid much attention; but now that she knew "Dr. Joe" was the Joe who had made her cry, by his song,

she was interested and wanted to know why her mother thought of him as "dear little Joe."

"Mother," she asked a few moments later, as the former joined her on the porch, "did you know 'Dr. Joe,' as they call him, when he was little?"

Clare gave her daughter a startled look, but answered quietly; "Yes, dear, I did know him when he was little. One summer I saw a great deal of him when he was a mere baby, not more than five years old. He was at the Bluff and we all grew to love him. But, dear, do not talk of those days. There are troublesome thoughts connected with them."

Dorothy was surprised and her curiosity aroused, but she kept her thoughts to herself. She was young enough to feel a thrill at the suspicion of a mystery, and the tears sprang to her eyes at the suggestion that her mother had a great sorrow that made the past painful. What had Dr. Joe to do with it all?

An invitation to a sail sent her thoughts

away from Dr. Joe and his mysterious connection with the past; nor did the thought of him again enter her mind until the morning of his expected arrival.

On this particular morning Dorothy and Mabel were sitting together in a shady corner of the latter's veranda. The boys were on the steps mending a net. Tom, aged fifteen, and Frank thirteen, were good-natured boys full of animal spirits, and the greatest teasers ever born, so the girls thought.

"He is coming this afternoon," began Mabel. It was not necessary to mention his name for few visitors found their way to Sea View.

"You mean Dr. Joe?" asked Dorothy. "Tell me, Mabel, why do you all call him Dr. Joe? What is his real name?"

"Smith, Dr. Smith, I suppose," answered Mabel, "but no one calls him that. Dr. Keene, our doctor, calls him Dr. Joe, and every one at the hospital does the same and even mother. He has been coming to our house for several years; but I have seldom been in when

he called and if I did happen to be at home I usually escaped as soon as I could. I never feel comfortable with him; I don't know why, but he always seems so serious and then mother talks of him as if he were a wonder in every way, and I hate wonders. They say, though, that he is really remarkably bright and has marvelous hands, so white and strong and deft, in a surgical way, as well as I can make out. I am sure I was never much interested but you seem to be, so I will go on. Well, Dr. Horne, the great specialist in children's diseases, thinks a heap of him, and mother says that when Dr. Joe's term is up at the hospital Dr. Horne will take him as his assistant. That is really all I know about him except that he holds his head up in such a funny way, as if he were trying to say 'cock-a-doodle-do.' But he really is not conceited and Frank says perhaps he got that habit from trying to look over Dr. Horne's shoulder; you know how awfully tall Dr. Horne is. Mother knew him long ago, but she will never answer any questions

about him; she always changes the subject and I don't care enough to press the point."

"Gee, here comes the melancholy sphinx!" cried Frank, and he and Tom dropped their net and made a rush for the door, and Mabel, to Dorothy's disgust, followed her unmannerly brothers' example and disappeared into the house.

Dorothy was thoroughly angry with Mabel, but the boys were beneath her notice. She rose, with all dignity, to meet the guest whose premature arrival had caused such a rout. She flushed for her cousins and extended her hand. She wondered if he would remember her. As he took her hand she glanced up at him with greater curiosity than she realized. "Yes, he did hold his head up a little too high and his hands were all that Mabel had said—but his eyes! Mabel had not mentioned the deep-set blue eyes that looked you through." Dr. Joe treated Dorothy to one of his rare smiles as he asked:

"Miss Dorothy, is it not?"

"Yes," replied the girl smiling back. "I hardly thought you would remember; I was such a baby then."

"Remember! How could I forget? I have never sung that song since."

"Oh, why not?" asked Dorothy. "I hope you will sing it while you are here; I love it."

"Then I shall certainly sing it," answered her companion.

"But, why have you never sung it since?" insisted the girl.

"Because it made you cry and that was the greatest compliment I ever received; so I have not liked to repeat it to a less sympathetic audience."

Dorothy was mystified. She felt that he was not just making phrases, and yet why was he so deadly in earnest about so little? It was this, no doubt, that made Mabel dislike him.

An audible snicker from the unmannerly boys, who had secreted themselves in some bushes just below the veranda, broke the spell

and Dorothy turned towards the door, her head very high.

"I must not keep you here," she explained. "Aunt Mabel should know of your arrival," and she led the way into the house.

Mabel now appeared with a sweet unconsciousness that ill became her, Dorothy thought with heat. Her greeting was as cordial as it would have been to her best friend and she did not seem in awe of him at all.

When Aunt Mabel had joined them Dorothy escaped to the veranda where, in a few moments, she was joined by Mabel.

"Now don't be mad," began the latter. "I really can't help it; he always makes me feel like running."

Dorothy thought of her cousin's greeting to this fearsome individual and sighed.

"Well, it is no affair of mine, but if he saw you I should think you would be ashamed of yourself."

"Bother it all, what do I care what he thinks!"

"Your brothers though!" continued Dorothy. "They hid themselves somewhere and gave audible snickers. It was awful."

It was with difficulty that Mabel suppressed a smile; but she tried to pretend she was angry and, holding her head very high, announced.

"I am very sorry that my brothers' behavior does not meet with your approval. Suppose you undertake their training in future and relieve me of further burdens." But it was impossible for good humored Mabel even to dissemble anger and she ended up with:

"I am going this minute to tell those boys what their cousin and sister think of them." And she ran down the steps in search of the miscreants. Dorothy knew from experience how it would end, for Mabel was very much of a boy at heart and would enjoy all the boys had to say of the "sentimental conversation," as they would call it.

The two girls were good friends and rarely disagreed to the point of a quarrel, which was really due to Mabel, who was possessed of such

imperturbable good humor that no one could make her lose her temper, if she had one to lose. As for understanding each other, the cousins were as far apart as the poles. Mabel was mostly on the surface, while there were depths in Dorothy's nature of which neither she nor any one else yet dreamed. She was usually diffident and spoke little of what was in her heart to any one. With her mother she was almost as reticent as with any one else, and as Clare was very different by nature she did not always understand her more reticent daughter. The mother had a horror of forcing a confidence, and many times when the daughter had been on the point of asking advice or of giving a confidence Clare had suddenly changed the subject, misunderstanding the cause of her daughter's hesitation. The girl needed so much encouragement though her self-reliant manner deceived even her mother at times. The dearest and best mother can not always dream of what is going on in her daughter's heart, especially when that

daughter is over-sensitive and apt to take fright at the first signal of loss of self-possession.

Dorothy was jealous of her own thoughts and aspirations, yet she would often have been relieved and glad had her mother wormed her secrets out.

Clare, however, could not conceive of such a state of mind. Hers was what would be called a well-balanced mind. She was sensitive but not supersensitive and could not understand her daughter's morbid fear of ridicule or regret at letting any one, even the dearest, see into her heart. She did indeed suspect a little of this supersensitiveness on the girl's part; but the greatest help in such a situation would have been a fellow feeling, and this, by the laws of nature, Clare could never have.

CHAPTER VIII

DOROTHY crossed the lawn slowly. She had heard her Aunt Mabel say to Dr. Joe: "I am so glad you came. It will be such a relief to us all." Was there, then, really anything serious the matter with her mother's heart? She knew that her mother had had a slight attack a month ago and that she had always suffered more or less from palpitation; but could it be that she was getting worse? She saw her father alone on the porch and went straight to him to ask the question. But he saw her approaching and called out,

"My, my, what a long face! Has Dr. Joe been too much for you, too?"

"I don't see why you all are in a conspiracy to malign him," she answered. "I fail to see anything melancholy about him, and he certainly has better manners than any of my cousins."

Judge Lee looked at his daughter with a twinkle in his eye. "Joe certainly has a warm defender!" he laughed. "But, come, tell me what is the trouble. Have you and your cousins agreed to disagree?"

"Nothing of the kind," declared Dorothy. "It is impossible to quarrel with Mabel. But, father, tell me, is there anything serious the matter with mother's heart?" Then she recounted Aunt Mabel's speech.

He looked grave a moment, then answered,

"No, there is nothing serious, but one can never take chances with heart disease, and any great excitement or sudden grief might be dangerous."

"That is really all?" asked the girl earnestly.

"Really all," he repeated.

"Well, we will keep all excitement from her; and had I not better make her give up the housekeeping and let me do everything?" went on Dorothy earnestly.

Judge Lee's brown eyes met the two eyes so like his own.

"How about the boarding-school?"

"I shall not go," replied the girl with an air of finality.

"Oh, yes, you *shall*, daughter dear. Mother wishes it, and don't you know that it is wise to save one's strength for really necessary sacrifices? Trials will come fast enough; you will not need to reach out for them. It is nobler to accept those that are chosen for us; and, dear girlie, in the years to come, doubtless, you will have your fair share of them. So save your strength now for the time when it may be needed which, God grant, may be in the very distant future."

Dorothy felt a little hurt and choked the tears back. He seemed to be making light of her love for her mother and calling a sacrifice what never should have the name. Yet in her heart of hearts she knew that he was right. She would indeed suffer deeply if she had to give up boarding-school, no matter how much she might *not* want to feel it. Had she that day been able to read the future she would have

known that she had sore need of all the strength these two calm years had the power to give.

"No more solemn looks or thoughts to-day," announced her father. "Smiles are all the sacrifices we want just now."

Walter came nearer to understanding the tortuous workings of his daughter's mind than did her mother for, after all, she was more like him than like his wife. She was young, he knew, and very much given to thinking, a habit he felt was not healthy.

That evening Mabel came over and besought Dorothy to join them in a walk along the beach. "It's moonlight and beautiful," she rushed on, "and romantic and—and—you don't seem to mind Dr. Joe, so we count on you helping us out. By the way, he and your mother had a long talk this afternoon and Tom heard her say when she was going, 'You will not forget? Dorothy knows nothing.' Wasn't it queer?"

Dorothy thought it certainly was queer, but

her strong sense of honor made her try to forget a remark that had not been meant for any ears but the Doctor's. What was the mystery? The plot surely was deepening.

The August moon was just visible above the horizon, "Coming directly out of the ocean," the boys declared, as the party started off for their stroll. Mabel had provided herself with an escort in the shape of a half grown boy from the hotel. Dr. Joe naturally fell to Dorothy. The boys were now far in advance, as a "stroll" did not and could not appeal to them; a race would better describe their mode of covering the ground.

Dr. Joe was at his best and again the girl wondered where the "melancholy sphinx" came in.

"I hope you are going to sing for us often now that you are here," she began.

"I am afraid," answered the young man, "that I have disappointed your cousins, for it seems they expected me to bring my banjo."

"I'm glad you didn't," declared Dorothy; "the banjo and the ocean!"

Joe laughed. "That's just it. I only play it to amuse the little cripples. I do not know much about real music and I feel as you do about the banjo and the ocean."

They both laughed and Mabel and her companion stopped and waited for the pair to overtake them.

"You two seem to be having a good time. What's the joke?"

The truth of the matter was that Mabel had found her companion a bore and wanted to escape. As was her wont, fortunately she did not wait for an answer, but hurried on.

"Do let us rest here. I am tired to-night and maybe Dr. Joe will sing us one of his songs, even if he did forget his banjo." The last with deep regret.

"What shall I sing?" asked Joe, for he was always willing to oblige.

"'After the Ball,'" answered Mabel with alacrity.

"Mabel!" gasped Dorothy in disgust.

"Well, that's my taste," announced Mabel, nothing daunted.

"I really can not recall the words of that song; I know only the air. How would 'Answer' do? It's a popular song and might even suit Miss Dorothy."

Dorothy wondered what he meant by "*even* Miss Dorothy," but she guessed that he wanted to choose a song that would appeal to both.

"I don't know it," said Mabel, "but go on, let's hear it."

And Joe did "go on."

The girls sat very still all during the song, Dorothy with her eyes on the ocean, Mabel peering back toward the hotel and trying to catch a bar or two of the dance music. When he had finished Mabel rose hastily exclaiming:

"It was very nice but too sentimental, and James and I are going over to have a couple of dances. You can wait for us here if you would rather look at the moon and sing."

She did not know how to explain it, but

there was something in his voice that brought back the uncomfortable feeling she frequently experienced in his company.

After they had gone Dorothy turned to Joe, "It was perfectly beautiful and I love your voice; it makes me forget myself altogether. Now sing *my* song; no one else is here and I promise I will not cry this time."

"It is such a sad song though," he objected. "Perhaps something else would do."

"No," insisted the girl, "something else will not do; 'Alice' or nothing."

And he sang it and Dorothy broke her promise, but he did not know it, there in the moonlight with her face turned away.

Ever since Joe's arrival Clare had experienced a queer, indescribable feeling. He had changed so little since the old days that his voice and his eyes haunted her and made her wish that Arthur were only home, for now she felt sure that, with Joe's aid, they would find courage to tell him all. She had told Joe that Arthur fully believed that he was their son

and she had read disapproval in those penetrating blue eyes. She knew that he was right. They had been weak; but she resolved that, upon his arrival in the fall, she herself would tell Arthur the truth and the whole story as she knew it.

Joe had freely told her of his life since that summer at the Bluff, and she marveled at his indomitable energy and perseverance with all the odds against him. She wished that he and Arthur were friends, for she could see that he possessed all the qualities Arthur lacked, or rather just the quality, for even to herself she did not acknowledge that Arthur needed anything but a more ready sympathy with his less fortunate brothers.

His letters lately were full of Miss Dumont. "She came of a fine old family, a descendant of some of the Revolutionary heroes," etc. Clare could see that, with the years, his pride was increasing and with each day the blow seemed harder to strike. As the years had gone on Clare had lost courage. She

knew she was only putting off the evil moment. "Why not wait until he asks again," a small still voice had whispered all these years and she had been only too glad to listen. Now it was harder than ever. He was so proud, and this Miss Dumont! She instinctively felt that this new arrival upon the scene would complicate matters. Unlike Alice, she had feared from the beginning that with Arthur it would be more than calf love. It was all absurd, of course, for he had not even a penny of his own and had still his profession to study. She knew, however, that the boy had a way of his own of overcoming difficulties and what he set his heart upon he generally got.

She and Walter had not for years mentioned the question of Arthur's birth. She half suspected him of leaving it all to her, not, she knew, because he wanted to shirk responsibility but because he had infinite trust in her judgment. To-day she wished he had not so much trust in her. The clinging vine type had never

appealed to her, but now her tired spirit cried out for the grand old oak. She wanted some one to take this secret, this heavy responsibility, from her forever. It was growing too heavy and she knew that of herself she had not the strength to put it down.

At school she recalled memorizing a verse by one of the old English writers beginning, "Shun delays, they breed remorse." At the time she felt that it had been written purposely for her. Putting off the disagreeable, or that which was to inflict pain on those dear to her, no matter how salutary the pain, was her one weak point, and she knew that as well when a school-girl as she knew it to-day. She told herself that she had not improved in all the years, and it was not a comforting thought.

At this point in her meditations the mail arrived bringing a letter from Arthur announcing his engagement and declaring that "the dear Marie was willing to wait for him until he had made a practice, and that the years of

waiting would be few," was his confident declaration.

"Well, it was too late now!" she told herself.

There was a letter also from Aunt Alice bewailing the result of the trip, but trusting to the long years of waiting to awaken the two star-gazers. "Marie," she declared, "was a petite blonde with gleaming white teeth and innocent child-like eyes of a most heavenly blue. She was all vivacity and fond of petting and praise. Perhaps I am wronging her," wrote Alice, "but I think she is deeper than she seems."

Clare saw that Dorothy was both disappointed and disgusted at her brother's choice, the very last type of girl they had dreamed he would care for.

Judge Lee looked grave and Clare saw an angry light in his eyes as he remarked, "What right has a man to become engaged with nothing in the immediate future?"

"I quite agree with you," said his wife.

"But I suppose we have let him have his own way so long that he thinks that all he has to do is to say he wants something and he must have it."

"At any rate do not worry about it, dear," warned Walter. "I believe all will come right in the end. That type of girl is not renowned for steadfastness. They may never be married." He said it all in lightness and it relieved Clare, though had she seen into the future—but why anticipate?

That evening, as Dorothy and Joe walked on the beach, Arthur's engagement was their chief topic of conversation.

"He should not have done it," said Dorothy angrily. "She is not the right kind of girl for him."

"Who knows!" answered Joe. "If we all chose the same kind it would be a tough world."

"Ah, yes; but there is not anything sentimental about Arthur. He always liked strong people. I never knew him to care for anything weak."

"But she is a person, not a thing," suggested Joe slyly.

"Now don't laugh at me," she implored. "It is bad enough without that. And for him to care for blue blood and all that un-American business, I never, never thought he would go so low."

"That does not make him any the less an American," Joe contended. "Lots of us feel that way, and after all it is Revolutionary blood of which he boasts."

"I don't care for your arguments. I am positive *you* would never feel that way, and if you did——"

"Well, and if I did, what then?"

"Oh, nothing," answered the girl; "you couldn't, that's all."

Joe marveled, for after all she had not known him more than a few weeks and yet she instinctively felt his absolute lack of sympathy with Revolutionary or any other kind of blood.

There was silence between them for a time and as they gazed out upon the sea the lap of

the waves on the shore seemed to soothe Dorothy. "It does give one strength, does it not?" she murmured.

"Yes," answered Joe. "It is the best friend I have in the world."

Immediately the girl was all sympathy.

"Dear me, that must be very sad!"

Joe smiled. "That does not mean that I have no other friends; God has been good to me in that way. Though I lacked a happy home life, mother, father, brothers, and sisters, other people have been more than friends to me, your Aunt Mabel first." Here he suddenly stopped himself. He had given Clare his word that he would never mention that summer to Dorothy, and here he was now on the point of doing so.

"Tell me," said the girl, "all about yourself if you really don't mind; I would love to hear."

"Well," continued Joe, "there is not much to tell except of kindnesses done me. When I was a little chap I went to a kindergarten.

Your Aunt Mabel was a friend of the teacher, a Miss Nash, who was very, very good to me and followed me up for several years until she got married and went West. At home I had a stepmother and a couple of step-brothers. We did not get along very well and my father did not help matters. He was out of work a great deal and I am afraid drank more than was good for him. Perhaps it was the unhappy home, or it may be his habits drove my mother to be cruel to us. Whatever the cause, we were not happy. I loved my father passionately and he was always very good to me. When I was eight years old he died and the next day I was run over by a coal-cart. I was picked up unconscious, and when I awoke I was being driven rapidly to the hospital in an ambulance and a kind-faced young physician was looking into my face and saying, 'poor little chap! Poor little chap!' I never forgot the look or the words, and I began to cry and he quieted me by telling me he wanted me to be a little soldier and show them all at the hospital

how brave I was. He seemed to *think* me brave, so I tried to live up to his idea of me.

“Well, the days in the hospital were sweet, except for the pain, and there was a great deal of that for my leg was broken in two places; but they brought me through. Dr. Horne, my friend of the ambulance and now the great specialist, was then an interne in the hospital. He was particularly interested in my case and I in him. One day when I was beginning to get better he sat down beside my bed and asked,

“ ‘Well, little chap, what are you going to do when you are a man?’

“ ‘Be a doctor,’ I answered, ‘just like you and cure little lads.’

“He laughed and patted me on the head. ‘Good-by, Dr. Joe,’ he said. ‘I hope we will meet again, when you are curing little lads; but meanwhile they are going to send you down to Sea Breeze to get strong.’

“I spent the whole summer at the Home for Cripple Children, and there I learned to love

the sea. I would sit for hours talking to myself and building castles. How I did enjoy its restlessness! Every one down there called me Dr. Joe, in fun at first, but after a while I never answered to any other name.

“When I was discharged as cured my step-mother had disappeared. It was learned that her children had been taken down with scarlet fever; she had neglected them and both had died. I knew that a boy of my age would not be allowed to shift for himself, for the street urchins are wiser in their generation than the children of the rich, so I determined to run away under cover of the dark, for I could not bear the thought of an institution. Well, I succeeded. I was not important enough to be searched for long. So I began my career as a newsboy.

“I made a precarious living at this, and when I was about eleven I got a job in a drugstore, running errands. I had always wanted to be in a drugstore because I thought it was a step nearer my ambition. One day, after I had

been working there about a year, I was carrying a package containing several bottles of a very precious chemical, and just as I came out the door from the back room who should be advancing toward me but Dr. Horne! I was so surprised that I dropped the package. He did not know me, but again I heard, 'Poor little chap,' in the same kind, sympathetic tone.

" 'This will cost you a week's pay!' snapped the druggist.

"Dr. Horne looked into my eyes. I knew he was watching to see if I were brave, and I met his look squarely, and in that moment he recognized me.

" 'Dr. Joel!' he cried. 'So you are on the road.'

"I had felt in my heart that by being in a drugstore I *was on the road*, but I would not have put as much into words, and yet he understood. Turning to Mr. Grey, he said:

" 'You will not want the boy any more? I will take him when he has worked out the price of the chemicals.'

“‘No, no,’ said Mr. Grey. ‘He has been a good boy since I have had him. I know it was a mistake. You may have him at the end of the week.’

“At the end of the week I went to Dr. Horne to be his office boy, and his sister, Miss Grace, undertook my education. Fifty cents a week she charged for the lessons, and I can never forget the kindness that suggested making me feel that I was paying for my education. She crammed me for the Regents and I went straight on until I had enough counts to enter a medical college.

“During these years Dr. Horne’s fame grew and I watched his practice increase until now he is a rich and influential man, but still just as kind and sympathetic to the poor as ever. I have learned to assist him in the office, so much so that he misses me very much since I have been in the hospital and declares that when my term is up I am to be his assistant. So you see the world has used me well, after all, and I want you to understand that my own struggle

and that of Dr. Horne's, for he also began life as a poor boy, have taught me to look for the man and not the blood. Arthur has not had this training."

After he had finished there was a long silence, then Dorothy rose from the log on which they had been sitting. Joe mechanically followed her example and they turned toward home.

"I am so glad you told me this," said Dorothy feelingly. "I never knew what you were until to-night, and you make the world seem full of good people. But you did not tell me what Aunt Mabel had to do with all this."

Joe was nonplussed. He had not expected this question and was angry that he had a promise to keep.

"Oh, she met me at Dr. Horne's and recognized me, though she had not seen me since the kindergarten days I spoke of. Since then she has been very kind and interested in all my work."

She was not quite satisfied, but she knew it

would be bad taste to press the matter further. He, as well as her mother and aunt, seemed determined to keep her out of the secret, whatever it was.

CHAPTER IX

Two days later Dr. Joe took his departure with the deepest regret of the summer colony. He had a wonderful tenor voice and was ever ready to sing when asked. For the boys and Mabel it was all the popular airs, and for Dorothy and the others songs of a very different order.

"I'm as sorry he has gone as I was to hear he was coming," confessed Mabel as she and Dorothy walked home from the station where all had gone to see him off.

Dorothy made no reply, but Mabel did not notice the fact. The former was thinking, "Do I really admire him more than Arthur?" It seemed disloyal and yet he understood things so much better and did not treat her like a little girl. Even his peculiar way of holding his head she now liked since Aunt Mabel had told her that it was the result of a long battle

with himself to hold that head up and "look the world in the eyes," a frequent exhortation of Dr. Horne's. He certainly did look the world in the eyes. Tom had lately remarked, "Gee! No fellow could tell a lie with those eyes on him." However, they were not accusing eyes, but frank and full of trust.

The following week passed quickly and by the first of September all were back in town busy shopping and visiting dressmakers, for on the tenth Dorothy and Mabel were to leave for boarding-school.

Clare could not bear to have her daughter out of her sight during these days and she had to be very brave and constantly on the alert for she knew that at the first sign of weakness Dorothy would refuse to go, and then both would be miserable.

"Good-by, darling, mother will be up on Thursday. No, no, I will not be very lonesome; it will soon be October and then Aunt Mabel will be just as lonesome; so we will have to console each other."

And the great hall door closed on the first separation of this mother and daughter. Mabel stood eyeing Dorothy with wonder.

"I give you up," she declared. "You *wanted* to come, so what are you crying about? I was *sent*, and I ought to be boohooing. Dorothy Lee, you are a riddle; but come, wipe away your tears; Sister is beckoning to us."

Sister Frances, one of their mother's classmates, took them in charge and during the two following years Dorothy grew to love this dear friend of her mother's with a love that made her convent days days of bliss.

Dorothy "took to the convent life as duck takes to water," as her mother expressed it. She would have been supremely happy had she loved her mother and father less. At times an overpowering loneliness would steal over her when she thought of them without either son or daughter to add life to the house; but the days were flying and it was almost the first of October, and on the fifth Arthur would be home! Fortunately the fifth was on a Thurs-

day, and Mabel and she had been given permission to go home for the day.

Though both girls were placed in the same class they naturally did not choose the same sort of companions. Mabel went in for all the fun obtainable and she soon took her place with the girls who longed for the happy day of graduation and the release from study it meant. In the meantime they considered themselves very much abused at *having* to stay at boarding-school.

Mabel, while a good scholar, was not a brilliant one. In class she worked hard; at recreation she forgot that there were such things as books.

Dorothy was an exceptionally bright pupil and the old scholars at first, in spite of themselves, resented this new-comer, who threatened to carry everything before her. However, when they came to know her, this feeling disappeared and it was tacitly understood that a friendly rivalry could exist.

Dorothy chose for her bosom companion a

girl named Eva Woods, who had been at the convent ever since she was five years old. She was a tall stately girl and a brilliant musician. She was an orphan and St. Jerome's was her only home. Dorothy was overflowing with sympathy for her new friend, though this was expressed more in acts than in words.

At length the long-looked-for fifth of October arrived and the two cousins were met at the station by Judge Lee, who hurried them down the pier, for the boat had passed Sandy Hook ahead of time.

They arrived just as the steamer came in sight and in time to join in the cheer from the pier. A moment later Dorothy was clasped in her mother's arm.

Now all eyes turned to the approaching liner and Dorothy cried, "Mother, mother, it's Arthur and Uncle Jack!"

A burst of laughter from the crowd showed that they had seen the huge American flag which Arthur and his uncle were waving with all their might.

As mother and daughter stood together holding hands closely, the same thought was in each mind.

“Will he be different? Have the years made a change?”

Now the vessel was in full sight and Arthur's bright eyes spied their group, and letting go of the flag he waved his cap.

His face was bronzed; he had gained flesh and looked every inch a man. At that moment Clare knew that the boy was dead and that the man had been born, and she gave up all hope of breaking off this unfortunate engagement.

At his right a fair-haired smiling girl stood—Miss Dumont, of course, from Arthur's constant looks and smiles in her direction.

He was the first down the gang-plank.

“Mother!” he cried, ecstatically, throwing himself into her arms. In a moment he had greeted them all in his old impetuous way, and before any one had had time to speak he exclaimed:

“But you must all meet Marie! Here she

is, Mother," and he led forward the much-talked-of blonde.

She was entirely at her ease and raised her rosebud mouth for a kiss. Clare showed her surprise at this greeting more than she meant to and Arthur, who was watching closely, noted the look and the evident forced friendliness. He had always had great faith in his mother's intuitive powers and was more anxious than he would have acknowledged for the outcome of this first meeting. That he was sorely disappointed there was no disguising.

Dorothy had seen and had guessed and she tried to make her greeting all the more cordial on that account. She noted his appreciative look when she kissed Marie with a warmth she did not feel and welcomed her as her future sister.

Mabel stood against a post looking at them all as so many curiosities in a museum. Suddenly her eyes caught sight of Uncle Jack and she knocked over a couple of suit-cases in her impulsive hurry to meet him.

Uncle Jack, the stalwart, handsome, good-natured uncle, and Aunt Alice were now making their way down the gang-plank. He had seen Mabel and enjoyed her boy-like antics to attract his attention. She was a girl after his own heart, good humored, easily satisfied, and taking the world as it came.

After Arthur had escorted Marie to her carriage and left her in her mother's arms they all started for home. There was a shade of disappointment about the home-coming that none of them could understand, yet each and every one felt.

That evening, the *first* evening, Arthur went to see Marie. Clare tried not to mind, for, after all, he said, they were engaged, though she had seen no ring, and engaged couples are expected to spend their evenings together. Walter was angry with the "boy," as they both called him, that is he was angry during the young man's absence; but there was something about Arthur that made anger or blame impossible in his presence. It was a subtle some-

thing that seemed to foreshadow the man of destiny. Both Walter and his wife knew that the boy was born to be a leader and to demand and secure a blind following. Judge Lee shuddered when he thought of the temptations such a temperament is bound to encounter.

When Dorothy and Mabel returned to school that evening they were besieged with questions about the hero of the day and his fiancée.

"Do you like her?" asked Eva quietly, when she and Dorothy were alone.

"No, I do not," answered her friend, "and I am ashamed of myself because I pretended to like her; but I really did it for his sake. You've just got to love him when he is near, and perhaps she could not help it; they were together so long."

Eva laughed softly. "It seems funny to blame a girl for falling in love; but then, of course, I don't know much about the world except what I read and I suppose I look at things queerly."

But Dorothy changed the subject quickly for she was afraid she might begin to blame Arthur, and Eva was, after all, a comparative stranger. Eva was just the kind of a girl to draw Dorothy out and the latter did not always want to be drawn out.

That evening Sister Frances heard more than the girl had meant to tell, but then "Sister" understood so well and guessed so much and never referred again to a conference given in a loquacious moment.

While Dorothy slept quietly in her peaceful convent home her father and mother sat talking and planning far into the night.

Arthur must begin his law studies at once and in two years he would begin his career. Then Dorothy would be home again! And they looked at each other. How they did miss her dear voice and sweet thoughtful ways!

"Walter," Clare began, "I want to take a more active interest in that plan of yours for a Home for Unfortunate Women. I have a

great deal of time on my hands now and I want to do a little good in the world."

"As if you were not always doing that!"

"Tell me," continued Clare, ignoring his remark, "have you really secured the old Van Brunt Mansion?"

"Yes, Mrs. Scott has offered it as a gift and dear Mrs. McGean is to be in charge. If she does not help the poor unfortunates I do not know who can, except you, and that is not your work."

"Ah, but I can help, though you overrate my powers."

"No, no," he answered, "I do not know how I would ever have been able to save that poor Rose girl from the Reformatory had you not got at her heart. It is not man's work; you women are the only ones who can help. Mrs. Clarke was very much interested at first, but when she found that the girls in most cases have no regard for truth she became discouraged and outraged and refused to have any further dealings with them.

"This is the great stumbling-block. It is this that makes so many good people turn against them, and yet though we all despise the liar some one must help him, some one must show mercy; he must be forgiven as well as any other sinner. He or she really seems weaker and must need more help and sympathy, not less. It is a great problem, and good people who are ready to offer forgiveness and sympathy to all other sinners stop here, become discouraged, and turn aside."

"Yes," agreed his wife. "It is the most discouraging thing to work against. To start out all faith and to have your trust shattered at every step requires a brave heart, and then there is something in us, stronger than ourselves, that makes us despise the liar, and yet, I suppose, most of them began to be untruthful as children, and the fault was let grow and flourish until now it has become second nature. But we will have to do the best we can, and I know Mrs. McGean will never be hard on them, for she has the kindest heart and she has

suffered so much herself that she knows how to feel for others. But what are you to call the home?"

"It would be better, I think," answered Walter, "to give it no name. We want it to be looked upon as a working girl's boarding-house. The sting of the reformatory, that follows such a girl all through her life, is what I want to avoid. Of course others have tried doing things along the same lines, but they have never had a Clare and a Mrs. McGean to really understand and be patient in the face of abused trust."

"Why don't you put me on a pedestal and offer flowers and incense?" laughed his wife. "You seem to forget that it is really Mrs. McGean who is to bear the whole burden of this undertaking with a little, indeed a very little help from me, among a number of others. But the hall door has just opened and I hear the familiar two steps at a time."

In a moment Arthur was in the room, and serious thought took flight for that night.

CHAPTER X

WEEK followed week rapidly for Dorothy and Mabel, with Sundays and Thursdays as red-letter days. Mother came twice a week and father as surely as Sunday dawned, Arthur frequently, some times alone—and then Dorothy's cup seemed full—and some times with Marie. These latter visits were a trial, for Marie was so apparently making an effort to be nice to Arthur's sister and was constantly going into the most extravagant raptures over the most trivial things.

Christmas vacation was all too short and Easter dawned just as the girls were beginning to get homesick and tired. At length the first Commencement day arrived and Dorothy won a medal.

Though she was delighted to be the winner of a medal, just like one of her mother's, and

felt that her victory would be good news for the loved ones at home, still her triumph lost some of the joy when Eva, her friend, had to be disappointed. Eva, however, showed no regret but congratulated the victor with warmth and sealed their friendship with a kiss. The tears sprang to Dorothy's eyes, and she wondered what she would have done in a like instance; she was sure she never could be as noble as Eva.

The summer was spent in the mountains and Eva had been given permission to spend the month of August with her friend. It was a very peaceful summer. One thing only marred their joy. Marie and her aunt came up and secured rooms at an adjoining hotel, and Arthur, of course, spent most of his time with them.

Eva was very much impressed with Arthur. At this Dorothy was not surprised, as every one was attracted by him. Eva's admiration was different. She was not sure at all that he was perfect, but she told Dorothy in all serious-

ness that "a really good clever wife could make him one of the greatest leaders the world ever had."

Dorothy was forced to laugh at her friend's wisdom. "Will Marie do that?" she asked teasingly.

"No," Eva had answered, "and I am going to pray that he will never marry her."

"Eva!" cried Dorothy aghast. "I would be afraid I would choke if I said a wicked prayer like that."

Those who did not know Eva might have thought that jealousy prompted her speech; but Dorothy, who knew her friend thoroughly, understood that no such feeling entered the girl's heart. Eva, who knew so little about the world, had a keen insight into character and her mind rebelled against the thought of Arthur throwing away his life on such a woman. She saw into Marie's shallow nature as keenly as Clare did, and she guessed that such a woman could make her husband's life a burden.

"It is not a wicked thought," she answered, "for I shall add, 'not my will but Thine be done.'"

Dorothy looked a little frightened, for she had the greatest respect for Eva's judgment and knew that it coincided with her mother's and her own really, if she allowed herself to think. Sister Frances had impressed upon the girl the necessity of overcoming morbid fears for the future. She had really over-emphasized the wrong in giving way to such fears; but she felt Dorothy must be cured of this habit at any price. To-day Dorothy remembered these kindly admonitions in time to keep her from falling into a train of gloomy thoughts, and Eva, noticing the effect of her words, hastened to efface their impression.

"Don't look so solemn, Dorrie dear. I am fond of ordering other people's lives, perhaps because I have never had a chance to order my own."

Every one had become fond of Eva, espe-

cially Clare, who could not but wish it had been Eva, not Marie, with Arthur.

The hero himself was strongly attracted by the girl, which fact Marie was not slow to resent and she and he had had their first real quarrel on the subject.

"What do I care for her," he had exclaimed. "She is a fine character, full of ambition and understanding, almost as much so as mother; but do you think I could ever care for any one else in the whole world as I do for my own dear little Marie!"

The golden head had sunk on his shoulder and great sobs shook the dear little Marie.

"Promise," she wailed, "only promise, you will never speak to her again."

"Don't you trust me?" cried Arthur, angry in spite of himself.

"Yes, yes," she sobbed, "but oh, I am so awfully jealous. I love you so, I couldn't have any one come between us. Only give that little promise and I will be good."

Arthur had no patience with jealousy and went on.

“Now like a dear little sweetheart don’t ever mention this matter again. You are young and do not understand, but I am a man and can not be a goose.”

After more pouts on her side and endearing terms on his the quarrel was patched up, for Marie saw that her fiancé had a will of his own which even her wiles could not conquer. However, she never forgave Eva, though the latter remained in blissful ignorance of the whole affair.

In August Dr. Joe made his appearance and he and Eva sang many duets, as she had a rich contralto, while Dorothy acted as accompanist.

In the fall Dr. Joe was to return to Dr. Horne and begin his career in earnest.

Dorothy was very fond of Joe, fond of him in no sentimental or romantic way; but she valued his friendship and looked up to and admired him for his high ideals. It was, indeed, a sisterly affection and nothing more.

He had understood things so well last summer, when she had no other sympathetic friend of her own age; but now she had Eva and she did not seem to need him so much.

Joe was quick to see and feel the change in her. He knew that with him it was going to be love, if indeed it was not that already. The change in Dorothy discouraged him, but he felt that he could afford to wait as Eva, so far, seemed his greatest rival.

In September the girls returned to school, and the fifteen members of the Class of 19—felt themselves very important beings. The last year at school, when all the other girls look up to you, the members of the Graduating Class, is truly a year of bliss.

While at school the days were peaceful and joyous, at home the clouds seemed to be gathering. Arthur was rarely home of an evening and Judge Lee's court affairs kept him downtown often until very late, so that Clare, who was not one of those who are "never less alone than when alone," felt a dull ache in her heart,

for her "own little girlie." Once she had been tempted to telegraph to Dorothy that she could not stand the separation any longer; but the sound of Walter's key in the latch had cheered her up again, and when he came she was ready for him with one of her brightest smiles, one of those smiles that still had power to deceive him against his better judgment.

Mrs. McGean's house, as they called the new Home for Unfortunate Girls, was getting along slowly but surely against many odds. An association of philanthropic women pledged themselves to supply the funds. Mrs. McGean, a widow with the warmest of hearts, was in charge, and Clare and other ladies, among them Aunt Alice and Aunt Mabel, did what they could to encourage and give a helping hand to the girls who really did want to make a new start. It was hard, thankless work in most cases, but the few that did respond made the labor doubly worth the trouble.

Clare had a special gift with these unfortu-

nates. The means she adopted were all her own. They came from her heart, just as Judge Lee's famous sentences came from his. Clare often came home from these visits sick at heart. There seemed to be something born in many of these girls that led them wrong almost unconsciously.

She kept counting the months until June. "Two more months." She resigned herself to bear it. At such times she would write a letter to her "girlie" full of love and longing, and though the daughter would kiss the dear letter repeatedly and perhaps shed a few tears over the pages she little dreamed of what her mother really suffered in this separation. Had she for a moment realized it she would have left everything, honors and the full, peaceful life, without a moment's hesitation.

But the months really did go by, and when Dorothy and Mabel came down for Arthur's graduation from the Law School their own great day was only two weeks away.

Arthur came off with flying colors and was

one of the orators of the day. His speech took every one by storm. He had the power to sway an audience from the moment he began to speak until the end was reached in a telling climax. It mattered not what he said, they were one with him and followed blindly, to wake with a start when it was all over, few really knowing what they had heard.

Judge Lee's magnetism was of a very different order. He appealed to the reason of his hearers. Each man felt that the judge was expressing just what *he* had always thought. What he said was fair and true, and when he wanted to put a case pathetically he seemed to reach both heart and head. His was never a blind leading.

As he listened to Arthur to-day, he held his breath—to think of the possibilities of such a voice coupled with such magnetism. How he wished the boy possessed a little more sympathy.

Clare was radiant. She did not let gloomy thoughts spoil her pleasure. How she did ad-

mire his telling style and the fearless way he looked his audience in the face.

Dorothy was so proud of him, "her own, dear, wonderful brother!"

All the relatives, Uncle Tom especially, were jubilant. "The boy is all fire and ambition," he whispered to his wife.

That evening, when Dorothy went to bed, she wondered if Marie had the head to understand what a wonderfully clever husband was to be hers. Arthur had confidently declared that, within a few months, he would have a practice established, and on this very day he had given Marie the ring.

The last evening of May, as the girls filed slowly up the chapel aisle to their places, holding the ribbons of the banner which Eva as president bore, a sadness and yet a sweet and holy sadness seemed to mingle with the odor of incense. All the members of the Class of 19— felt it more or less, Dorothy deeply. The dear familiar hymns seemed, on this particular evening, to lift her soul to heights never

dreamed of before. As the organ trembled and swelled in that appealing hymn ending, "Mother tell me, what am I to do?" the girl felt that no prayer could be more beautiful or more powerful than both words and music of that exquisite hymn.

After Benediction, as the girls' voices rose and fell in "Farewell, farewell, month of Mary," Dorothy's soul cried out for some grand sacrifice. She wanted to do something great for the love of God to-night. She wanted to be a nun, a member of a Contemplative Order. She felt like St. Peter, "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

But poor Dorothy was forced to come to earth again with a thud, and a humiliation that she had *not* been praying for awaited her. She had been so rapt that she did not notice the signal to rise and leave the chapel and she now suddenly realized that she, and she alone, occupied a pew and that the last girl was just leaving the chapel. She knew that she must have caused confusion at not taking her place

behind Eva and that a reprimand awaited her and that from one who had little sympathy with sensitive and diffident culprits. However, she went immediately to take her medicine and it was indeed a bitter dose, as she was told that she was guilty of inattention and disrespect to God in "dreaming" in chapel, and of setting a bad example to the school.

Dorothy would have gone to the stake rather than tell what she had been "dreaming" of at the moment when she should have been taking her place in the aisle, and fortunately she was not asked.

When the culprit returned to her place Eva linked her arm in her friend's and led her towards a quiet corner of the hall.

"After all, dear, you are making a mountain out of a molehill," she whispered.

"Yes, I know," answered her companion. "But it is the nasty little hills that trip one up every time. When I long to do great things—I—I—oh, I can't put it into words."

"You mean that when your eyes are raised

to the mountains your feet stumble over the molehills and you are brought to earth again."

"That's just it. To-night"—and she grew scarlet at telling even Eva—"I was thinking how I longed to do something great and noble, to offer myself in some great sacrifice. I wanted to die to self and—and—then I looked up and all the girls had gone and I realized that—that I had stumbled over the molehill, as you would say. I suppose I needed something to knock the conceit out of me and to show me how little I am able to bear with patience. But do you know that, far from being humbled, I am in a horrid temper. If one could get a private place to cry in one could get rid of that horrid suffocating, angry feeling; but here you can't even have a cry to yourself, except in bed, and even there you have to burrow under the bedclothes to be let alone."

"Come up to my room," suggested Eva. "I think we could get permission."

"What! a favor granted to *me to-night*, I

who showed such a bad example to the school! You forget!"

"Now, Dorrie dear, don't get sarcastic. I do think you need a little time to yourself; but since you can't have it let us do the next best thing; let's try to laugh it off. They are playing a two-step; come, let's join them and forget."

Dorothy accepted her friend's advice and soon danced the anger out of her heart, and when she stepped into the Oratory on her way to bed it was a very humble Child of Mary that knelt before her tender Mother on that last evening of May.

CHAPTER XI

IT was the evening before Commencement and the fifteen members of the Class of 19— were assembled in a group under the weeping-willow trees listening to the lap of the waters, for they were, in the parlance of the school, “down at the river.” They had been singing all the old favorites, and now a hush had fallen upon them. Even the most thoughtless among them felt the spell of this, their *last* evening.

“I wonder what each and every one of us will be doing a year from to-night,” mused Alice Gray, a thoughtful member of the class.

“I for one,” cried Mabel, jumping up and shaking the grass from her skirt, “shall not be mooning and looking into the future. I shall be laughing and having a glorious time. You are all so horribly sentimental to-night!”

"A year from to-night I shall be in sunny Mexico," cried Mercedes, a dark Spanish-looking girl.

"Well, I hear the unromantic bell," broke in Mabel again. "A year from to-night there will be no more bells to bother us, thank goodness! Come on, before Eva and Dorothy have a chance to weep over the 'dear dead days beyond recall.'"

Commencement day dawned, a perfect June day. Dorothy and Eva shared the honors, poor Mabel getting, as she expressed it, "nothing but her walking papers." Eva was valedictorian and she spoke feelingly all the way through, ending in a sob. It had been her home for fourteen years and it was hard to go.

The girls of the school were divided in their opinions. The older ones thought it was perfectly beautiful for that sob to come just where it did, while the younger ones thought her the greatest goose imaginable to weep at the thought of graduating!

"In three days I shall be home with you never to leave you again," whispered Dorothy, her arms about her mother's neck, as the guests departed for the train.

The following days the girls were privileged characters, allowed to go and come as they pleased. They were blissful, care free days, but the end came on Saturday.

Friday night Eva, whose bed was next to Dorothy's, thought she heard a sob.

"Dorrie!" whispered Eva, her arms about her friend's neck. "What is it? You don't want to go *home*!" in a tone of incredulity.

"Oh, it isn't that!" wailed the sufferer.

"You—don't—want to—be—a—nun!" cried Eva, aghast at the thought.

"No, no, it is just that peaceful, happy things can not last forever. I feel somehow that when I go home everything is going to be different."

Eva felt impatient. It was a long time since Dorothy had given way to blue fits and Eva could not understand how a girl with a home

such as her friend had, where she was surrounded with all love and care, could deliberately go to work and make imaginary trouble for herself, but she was far too fond of Dorothy to show her impatience.

"Don't be a goose, dear," she coaxed. "Think of me. I am mad for a change while you dread it. I am going to—college, where the life will be little different from what it is here. I have no dear father or mother to go to, no one to leave but our dear Sister Frances. Think of all you have and you will never be blue."

"That's just it," moaned Dorothy, "I am afraid that the love and peace in our house is going to—to——"

"Don't, don't!" cried Eva in alarm. "How can you ever think such things!"

"What things has she been saying?" asked Sister Frances, who had come up to the bed unobserved.

"Horrid things!" cried Eva, and there were tears in her eyes, which she hurried away to

hide, leaving Dorothy to get what she declared Sister Frances was bound in conscience to give her, namely a "good scolding."

It was more than an hour before Sister Frances left the culprit's bedside. Two minutes later Eva turned with a start to find her friend at her side for their last good-night kiss. They both realized it was the last and clung to each other for several minutes.

"Never mind," whispered Eva, "we shall always, always, be friends."

In the morning Dorothy was thoroughly ashamed of her blues and her fears and, though there were tears in her eyes as she kissed Sister Frances good-by, she was very happy. She would write long, long letters every week and run up on frequent visits. It was hard to lose the daily companionship of Eva; but they also consoled each other with the promise of a heart to heart correspondence.

It was a glorious June day and Mother and Aunt Mabel were coming in Aunt Alice's car with Arthur as chauffeur. The dear place

never looked so lovely as it did this morning; the grass was the tenderest green; there were flowers everywhere, and the waters of the Hudson seemed to rival the blue of the sky.

"Only the sea is more beautiful," thought Dorothy, and she was glad that they had taken a cottage on the river for the summer.

All were in the best of spirits as the car sped over the road toward home. Father had also come as a surprise and nothing seemed needed to make the day a perfect one.

Arthur had been taken into the District Attorney's office as one of the many minor assistants. His duties were simply to prepare cases for his superiors. This hurt his vanity a little; still it was along these lines that he hoped to attain success. To be a prosecuting attorney, rather than a lawyer for the defense, was his ambition.

The cottage this summer was within easy commuting distance of the city, so that they had Arthur with them every evening but Saturday and Sunday, which days Marie claimed

in her retreat by the sea. He had never been as lovable in his life as he was this summer.

"Did ever mother have a son like him!" Clare would exclaim when he brought some little present from the city which was just what she had been longing for, but had never put the thought into words. He was always thinking of something for her comfort or pleasure and really making the thought of his marriage and consequent separation from them harder and harder to bear.

"If only there were no Marie!" Clare caught herself wishing a hundred times a day. Dorothy frequently thought this too, and at such times she would remember Eva's prayer; but she resolutely dismissed the doleful forebodings and tried to be unselfish and wish for what he seemed to wish most in the world, the day when Marie would be really his wife. She could not wish it, but she made desperate efforts to do it, but never got any farther than wishing she *could* wish it.

One evening towards the end of August Arthur rushed home in great excitement. A certain case had to be pushed and the principal members of the District Attorney's staff being away the case had most unexpectedly fallen to him, and he was to appear in court the following week against the prisoner. It was an ordinary case of larceny against a woman of over fifty.

Judge Lee did not like the prospect, for the case would be tried in his court and Arthur would be pitiless and he, the judge, would need to use all the power he possessed to help the prisoner, if help were possible. It would be a trial of power between them.

"I would just love to hear your first case," said Dorothy, surveying her brother with a sweet wistfulness.

"Well, come," replied the hero. "Why not? Marie is coming up just for it."

Father and mother both looked disapproval. Clare remembered how she had longed to hear Walter's first case, but he had told her such a

court was no place for a young girl, and she had not argued.

"Dorothy must not go," said Walter in a tone that they all well knew meant that his decision was irrevocable. No one objected, for it was seldom that he gave such a decided refusal to a request of his daughter's. Nevertheless it was hard, especially when all the others expected to go.

The morning of the young lawyer's first case dawned hot and stifling. There was not a breath in motion, and Dorothy tried to dissuade her mother from going. Aunt Mabel, however, quieted the girl's fears by assuring her that Dr. Joe would be on hand and that if her mother got faint he would see her safely home.

After they had gone Dorothy could not rest; the old blue feeling returned and she was almost tempted to disregard her father's words and follow them to the court house.

At ten o'clock Judge Lee took his seat and the case of the People against Mary Evans

was called. The prisoner was a slovenly gray-haired woman, with a prominent red nose and watery eyes. She was charged with larceny. It was a flagrant case of abused trust. She had stolen from a neighbor who had befriended her and had spent the money on drink.

It was Judge Lee's custom in such cases to get the prisoner to go back to her early life and to discover, if possible, what had caused, or led up to, her choosing a life of crime. This merciful practice was to-day destined to bring down the sword that had so long hung over their heads.

"Who were my parents, and where did I live," repeated the woman slowly, and as she hesitated she happened to glance at Arthur's face and the look of scorn she saw there suddenly worked her into a frenzy and she cried out, pointing her finger at him:

"*You!* Of all people to scorn me! I, your own mother! Yes, I can prove it. I have all the papers."

"Silence!" cried the judge, and his face had turned as gray as the wall behind him.

"No!" screamed the prisoner, "I will not be quiet until you acknowledge that you are not his father and she is not his mother," pointing to Clare.

"Remove the prisoner!" commanded the judge, but no one recognized his voice.

Arthur's look of scorn had quickly given place to one of anger; but as he glanced from father to mother he read his doom. He stood like a pillar of ice and turning to the judge asked in a high clear voice.

"Will you be kind enough to answer that woman's question?"

"Not now," said the judge, in a shaken voice. "This is no place for it."

"But I must know now and here," demanded the young man, and his voice had a ring of steel in it. "Are you my father?"

"No," answered the judge, and there was the depth of despair in the word.

"And is she my mother?" His tone was still

hard and he did not even glance toward Clare.

"No," came the answer almost in a whisper.

Arthur turned on his heel and left the court by one door, Marie by another, though she took care not to meet him.

A piercing cry brought the judge to his senses and in a moment he had ordered the court cleared and was hurrying to his wife's side. Dr. Joe was working over her. He was thoroughly frightened, for he knew the condition of her heart and well realized that this meant either immediate death or many years of invalidism. The former contingency seemed, at the moment, the more likely. But Clare's wonderful vitality won and in less than half an hour the worst was over and she was placed in a carriage and on the way home.

As the carriage drew up at the door Dorothy rushed out. The heat had been too much after all! She stood by speechless as her father and Dr. Joe gently lifted Clare out of the carriage and bore her into the house. "What is it,

Aunt Mabel?" asked the girl, for one look into the faces about her had told her that it was something more than heat prostration.

Aunt Mabel seemed on the verge of hysterics and from her nothing intelligible was to be gained; but Dr. Joe came to the rescue and whispered, "She fainted in court. You will have to be very brave and the brains for all. When she is comfortably settled in bed, come down and your father will tell you all. Don't let your mother see that you are frightened, and ask her no questions; try to smile and reassure her. Don't worry, she is safe now," he added, "and I shall stay here for another hour at least."

Dorothy thanked him and did exactly as she was told. When the mother had been made comfortable she tried to smile into the daughter's loving eyes; but the girl could hardly hide the tears at the ghastly failure. Mary, the ever-faithful maid, now took her place at the side of her mistress and Dorothy hurried down to hear the worst.

Joe met her at the foot of the stairs. "He is in his study and asked me to send you to him."

Dorothy turned the handle gently and went in so softly that the judge did not hear her.

"Father," she cried, and she rushed to him and threw her arms about him. "Father, don't look like that. It will kill me! Has anything happened to Arthur, and where is he?"

"Daughter!" began Walter, and his voice was that of an old man, "I want you to promise me that you will never tell a lie or act one all your life, no matter how much you may think it is for some one's good. Never shift your responsibility; never delude yourself with the idea that somebody else is stronger to do that which is your duty to do. It is the life of a despicable coward."

Dorothy had never heard him talk in this way in all her life and she was frightened.

"The story is a long one," went on her father. "The summer before we were married

Mabel, Alice, and Clare wanted to help some of the poor little street Arabs and give them a change into the country, and so they went down to West — Street, and your mother brought back Arthur, whom she found on the street giving orders to the others. Mabel took Joe, our Dr. Joe.”

Dorothy gave a gasp of surprise. Arthur taken from the streets and he so full of pride, and Joe! This then was the secret her mother had tried to hide.

“Alice took a little girl, who has since died,” went on the judge. “Of course these children’s parents were consulted but Arthur’s mother had died a few weeks before Clare had appeared on the scene, at least so a Mrs. Connors, who took care of him, told Clare at the time. After the summer we had grown to love the boy so much we could not give him up, and so we adopted him and made the mistake of our lives in keeping the secret from him. It is all my fault. I should have understood. Well, in court this morning a

miserable woman prisoner declared herself as Arthur's mother. Be brave, dear! I don't believe her story; but she drove Arthur to ask me there in the public court the question he should never have had to ask. I had to acknowledge that neither Clare nor I are his parents. Poor mother fainted," he went on slowly, "and the boy turned on his heel and left us. I do not blame him for a moment. I have done him a great wrong and perhaps he has gone to find out what the woman really means."

Dorothy's face was now as white as her father's. "How terrible," she moaned, but immediately remembering Dr. Joe's words, "you must be the brave one," she struggled with her grief and answered,

"But he should not forget all that you have been to him."

"Few men in his place would have acted differently," the father returned. "You must remember his pride, and we men are cruel when we feel that we have been deceived, no matter

what the motive. If I could only bear it alone, but to know that she must feel it even more deeply, as I do not know what it means to love as she does." And he buried his face in his hands.

Dorothy felt that the time had, indeed, come when not a thought for self must find room in her mind. She must indeed be the brave one at whatever the cost. The cross, that mysterious cross she had heard so much of, had come to her, but oh, it was not the cross she had dreamed of. How could peace and this particular cross go together! Rebellion, not resignation, took possession of her heart.

"Don't blame yourself, Father dear," she begged. "Go and sit by Mother for a little while. I know she is wondering where you are. If you only hold her hand she will understand. Each of you is taking too much blame and, after all, you have loved him and made him what he is."

"The poor boy! I am afraid his heart has

turned to stone. His pride is awful! But do not grieve too much, dear. In God's good time all may come right again."

CHAPTER XII

WALTER went up to his wife and Dorothy sought Joe, who added any little details the girl wanted to know.

The young man was sure the woman was a hoax. "Why, Mrs. Connors (who, by the way, they must move heaven and earth to find) told Clare that she herself had closed the mother's eyes," so Aunt Mabel had informed him. Mrs. Connors said that the woman had spoken of a brother and of a sister, but had not had strength enough to tell where they could be found. She wore no wedding ring but Mrs. Connors thought that the husband might have been a scamp or might have pawned the ring, and Father Cassidy, who frequently came to see the woman during the beginning of her illness, told Mrs. Connors that Mrs. Brazier was a saint if there ever was one. A week before the sudden change for the worse, Father Cas-

sidy had been transferred to another church and another priest had to be called to the dying woman, and the confidence she had so long deferred she was now too weak to utter, and so her secret was buried with her. So the boy was left alone in the world and it was just about this time that Clare had appeared upon the scene.

This was all they knew of Arthur's early life and everything depended upon finding Mrs. Connors. It would have seemed an almost hopeless task to any one else, but Dr. Joe had endless perseverance and he promised himself that he would not rest day or night until he had solved the mystery.

Half an hour later a familiar key was heard in the latch and Dorothy hurried into the hall to meet her brother, but a thing of ice and stone had taken his place.

"I wish to see the judge," he announced in a tone of steel.

The words of sympathy died on the girl's lips. "Brother!" she began brokenly, timidly

putting her hand on his sleeve. But he rudely shook the touch off and with a hard, scornful laugh interrupted her,

“My dear girl, do you still need proofs that I am not your brother, but the son of a hag? Oh, yes, it will be a beautiful story for the morning papers! But if you will be kind enough to call the judge I will be obliged.”

Her Arthur, their Arthur, was dead; and this creature of stone had taken his place! There was not a word of inquiry or of sympathy for her who had been more than a mother to him. As she looked at the white set face, the hard mouth, and the steel blue eyes she felt that an impenetrable door had been ruthlessly closed between them, with a heavy bolt on his side. This Arthur and her Arthur were two separate and distinct individuals. In all her sympathy for him, and it was profound, she could not forgive his bitterness toward his foster-parents. Justice! Where now was his boasted love of justice!

While these thoughts were rushing through

her brain her father appeared, and Arthur and he were soon closeted in the study.

The interview lasted nearly an hour, and Dorothy spent the time in great suspense by the patient's bedside holding the loved sufferer's hand. At length they heard his step on the stairs; but it was dull and measured, not the familiar two steps at a time.

Clare and her daughter exchanged glances. Would he stop at her door? But no, the dull step went on, up to his own room. The girl's hand shook in spite of herself, and the mother squeezed it tightly in response.

"Never mind, girlie! Mother knows it has got to be a hard fight and a long, long one. We must all be brave. In God's good time——" But the dear voice died away in weakness.

Dr. Joe's timely arrival saved Dorothy, for he saw her face and motioned to her to escape. Taking a bottle he measured out some drops and administered it to the patient. In a few minutes she had revived.

"Dear Joe," she whispered, "you are such a comfort to us. You will have to take the place of son to us for a little while. Please tell them that I understand the boy better than they do. It is all his awful pride. I am willing to wait, yes, even years, for it *must* come right in the end. Tell them not to be discouraged. Poor little Dorrie! She is young and the blow was so hard, and to her so sudden. Tell her not to harden her heart against him, and please make them understand that I *must* not be deceived, but must be told the truth even—if it does turn out that she is his mother."

She was tired now, and Joe, after promising all she had asked, left her with Mary and went down to join the father and daughter.

The judge was tramping up and down his study, and Dorothy sat bolt upright in a chair by his desk, her color coming and going and a look of unutterable rebellion on her face. Joe halted at the door, but the judge called him in.

"What do you suppose he is going to do

now?" he cried, wheeling around upon the young man. "He is convinced by the woman's story and the proofs she seems to have, wedding ring, marriage certificate, etc., and there are other so-called proofs. She claims that she had a nurse who loved him very much and acknowledges that she neglected the child and used to quarrel with her husband (now fortunately dead); and one day the nurse and child disappeared and she never cared enough to hunt him up. The nurse it was, she claims, whom Mrs. Connors nursed in her last illness. She recognized Arthur's picture in the paper at the time of his graduation and has since kept track of him. She thought it was her son, she avers, but was not sure until she saw him in court; then she saw the resemblance to his grandfather and she was sure of it, and she made the desperate attempt to prove it. She gives the name of her father, a prosperous western manufacturer, now dead, and of her sister and brother, both also deceased. It seems that the father disinherited the daughter

for marrying the man she claims to have been Arthur's father, a clerk in a dry-goods house. The son went through his share of the money and died bankrupt; the sister died in some accident. This is not indeed all. Arthur has announced himself as satisfied and, instead of awaiting convincing proofs other than those she gives, he has put an advertisement in the papers for information on the subject and has decided to rent an apartment, furnish it, and bring her there at once to *live with him!* 'If she is my mother,' he says, 'in common justice I must bring her to my house.' It is all too horrible, and when I mentioned the money side and offered to advance him something he flatly refused, saying he had other sources from which he could borrow. I had feared this would go hard with him, but no one could have foreseen this frightful transformation."

Joe was as horrified as the others at Arthur's quixotism. Dorothy could control herself no longer and made a precipitous retreat.

She locked herself into her own room and

fell on her knees by the bed, but no prayer was forthcoming. She felt that she too was fast becoming a thing of marble. And *he* was in the next room and, from the sounds that reached her ears, he was packing. Arthur going from them in the flesh and in the spirit! She could not face the thought of life without his cheery voice and contagious laugh. Life now seemed nothing but an unwilling burden to be taken up and stumbled along under. If he would only open his heart to their sympathy, nothing would be too much to do for him. Though the girl told herself she hated him for his selfishness, her heart whispered that at the least sign of relenting she would rush to him, willing, nay anxious to forget and forgive. As she knelt there, dry-eyed and tongueless, rebellion robbed her of the peace her mother had found in resignation to the Divine Will. "God," she thought, "does not send a trial like this, a trial that brings out the worst in every one's nature." All her mother's lessons, acted more than spoken, were cast to the winds.

This was her battle and she must fight it out in her own way. It was her first real grief. The blow had been so unexpected that she was, as yet, dazed, and the future seemed a dark endless road with never a turn or light to cheer the way.

As for Clare, she could not understand herself. The dead calm that crept over her spirit was something so new to her that she wondered if she was the same woman who had gone to court that very morning. Lassitude of mind and body were new and queer sensations for her. She wondered that she did not *feel* it all more acutely. Her boy's life wrecked! Poor Walter! It was all really her fault. In her heart she never for a moment blamed the boy. She understood him and his over-mastering pride, and her heart bled for him. She was proud herself, and she knew that a mortal wound had been inflicted and in a public courtroom. Would he recover, and when? God and only God could now help. Her wonder-

ful faith and confidence now came to her relief, and while the daughter was wildly fighting against the thought that God really could send such a cross, the mother accepted the cross and laid it at His feet, confident that He would bless it and help her to bear it. Continued mental concentration seemed to tire her in a way strange to her. She tried to throw off this heavy lassitude, but the effort only increased the feeling. She did not know that a stroke, very slight indeed, but nevertheless a stroke, had mercifully lessened her capacity to suffer actively. The doctor had not, as yet, told the family, for he knew that it had passed off, leaving no paralysis, merely a numbness and the inertia that Clare could not understand.

There was sleep for no one in the stricken house that night. In the morning Dr. Joe and the judge went out together, determined to sift the woman's story to the bottom.

"Don't worry," Joe had counseled, as Dor-

othy bade them good-by. "We will bring good news. I am certain the story can not be true."

The girl smiled sadly, for she did not share his hopes. She had fought the thought all night long; but with the dawn she had given up hope.

Her father, while apparently as confident as Joe, seemed to have lost his self-dependence and looked to Joe to guide and direct matters.

As the door closed upon them Dorothy wondered what they would have done without Joe. They all took his help as a matter of course, and yet what right had they to claim so much of his time?

The uncles and aunts now began to arrive and poor Dorothy's patience was tried to the utmost.

Aunt Mabel was broken-hearted at Clare's condition and outspoken against Arthur's behavior; though she did not know how very hard he had been. This put Dorothy on the defensive and, against her will, she defended him to

Aunt Mabel and excused him as she would not excuse him to herself.

Aunt Alice wept most of the time and moaned about the poor boy and gave vent to so many useless regrets that the girl lost patience and asked her aunt if she had no sympathy for the mother who had been more than a mother to him. One moment she found herself defending him from Aunt Mabel's attacks, the next hotly accusing him to Aunt Alice.

Uncle Jack was annoyed at any trouble to spoil the even tenor of his life and easily decided that, undoubtedly, the woman was Arthur's mother, and it was for them to make the best of a bad affair.

Uncle Tom was hot with anger at the boy for his quixotism in accepting the woman as his mother and most of all at taking her to his own house.

Among them all Dorothy felt that her mind would give way. "She must be the brave one," Joe had said, and indeed he was right. They all seemed to be trying to make it harder for

her. Thank God, there was a Dr. Joe to calmly take the reins and to understand. He did not blame or accuse.

The two uncles went down to the court to see what could be done, Uncle Tom to scold, and Uncle Jack to urge "peace at any price."

Soon after the aunts left, and Dorothy heaved a sigh of relief. She had never felt so much alone in the world before. To her mother in her present state it was useless to go; and when she thought of that dear impulsive mother so changed, her anger rose and her heart thumped so that she felt there must be an evil spirit in her, struggling for mastery, and at each throb his victory seemed more assured. For herself she could have borne anything—hardness, coldness, ingratitude, injustice even; but for her mother and father to be made the victims seemed more than she could accept with resignation. Why did God give Arthur a stone instead of a heart! One word from him of kindness would go such a long way to help her mother's recovery. Yet

that one word he would not speak, and the one look that would heal he denied her who had been such a true mother to him. "This was a trial that *did not* come from God," she insisted.

At this point in her meditation she was called to entertain a certain voluble lady who had come to condole with the afflicted family. The papers had given the story to the world that morning. The lady inveighed against such troubles being sent and confirmed poor Dorothy in her blind reasoning, the reasoning that led away from peace.

"Nó," she told the girl, "God did not send such troubles. He loved his own too much. It was Satan himself who sent this trial," and so on.

After her visitor's departure Dorothy was, naturally, even less at peace than she had been before. She longed for a talk with Eva; but it would have been useless after all, for she would never bring herself to tell Eva how Arthur had acted and, to her, this was the

part of the cross that she could not make herself bear willingly. It seemed so needless and heartless. Sister Frances's counsel would have been balm had she been near to find out the truth for herself; but even to her Dorothy knew she could not pour out her heart without blaming Arthur. She might blame him to herself, but no one else must reproach him. Only Joe understood and to him only could she talk freely without the fear of being misunderstood. But dwelling on the trouble was useless, she must do something active to quiet head and heart; so she bathed her hot face and went up to her mother. At the door she paused. "Repression, repression, repression! How long could it last?" To a nature such as hers it promised to be a long-drawn-out battle, with self-possession and self-control for watch-words.

The mother studied the daughter's face anxiously; but the girl stood the scrutiny bravely.

"Is it in the papers?" asked Clare calmly.

Dorothy was tempted to answer "No," but

her father's words rang in her ears, "Never tell a lie, or act a lie even if you think it for some one's good." Of course this could not be followed literally with one in her mother's state, but, as far as she was able, she meant to be candid.

"I haven't looked at the papers" (which really was the truth), fenced the girl. "We will not look at them, Mother! We are better off without any more pain."

To her surprise, her mother acquiesced quietly. "Perhaps you are right, daughter; but promise me you will not hide anything from me. If she proves to be his mother, really, and I fear it is so——"

"Don't, Mother," cried the girl. "We will not believe until we must." Her mother's words seemed like a prophecy and they had given a death-blow to the daughter's hopes, for Clare's intuition had seldom proved at fault.

It was long past noon when the judge and Joe returned, and one glance told the girl that

they had returned hopeless, convinced against their will.

Joe told her the story. The woman was in a very much run-down condition and suffering from a serious heart affection from which she might die at any moment. He had advised Arthur to send her to a hospital, as sentence had been suspended owing to her condition. Arthur had bluntly refused and had decided to take her that day to his apartment, where a nurse would take care of her. "You see I want my mother's funeral from my own home," he had said with a harsh laugh.

The woman's story seemed too well connected and backed by too many legitimate proofs to admit of its being a hoax. She had described her husband and told Arthur of a slight deformity he had, and of which no one knew but his foster-parents and Joe himself. It had not been a secret to the street children, when Joe and Arthur had played together on West — Street. Arthur had been proud of his foot of only four toes, and the other young-

sters had envied him. The woman said his father had been afflicted in the same way.

Joe determined to set out that very evening to Joyceville, where the woman claimed that her father and family had lived and died, and where she had met and married Arthur's father. He also was Arthur Brazier and had been a clerk in a dry-goods house.

Every detail was given so freely and so fearlessly that the young man's heart had sunk, and when he asked for the marriage license she quickly handed it over. The Baptism certificate, she told him, could be verified at St. — Church, this city; but he must go to Joyceville to verify the marriage license.

She had an old dilapidated bag, which she had held on to for dear life ever since her arrest. It seems she was never seen without this particular bag. Out of this receptacle she brought forth her proofs, yellow with age but still legible. The wedding-ring which she wore had her husband's initials and her own engraved within. From the bag she took a

little yellow baby dress and one worn baby shoe. These mementos proved, at least, that the mother had not altogether died in her heart.

At the moment of losing hope Joe had clenched his hands and wished that the old hag, for hag he called her in his anger, was dead, though, now that she had declared herself, even death could not remove the stigma that she was Arthur's mother. Why had she been content to keep quiet all these years and now declare herself, *now* when she had the power to ruin her son's career! True, she had whimperingly declared that she had never meant to intrude her relationship, but had been goaded into it by her son's expression of scorn on that fateful morning. Uncle Tom had stormed to Arthur about doing so-called *justice* to a mother who had never shown common humanity to her son; and Uncle Jack had pleaded to send her to a hospital, but all to no avail. Arthur had coldly listened and had refused to be influenced.

CHAPTER XIII

THE following morning Dr. Joe set out for Joyceville and Uncle Tom rushed around to the newspaper offices, putting in advertisements for a woman named Connors who had lived in West — Street, in the summer of 188—. Joe had little hope that his trip would throw any light on the subject. He verified the license and questioned many people about the town, but none of them had any information to give him about Brazier.

Of Arthur's grandfather, John West, many could speak and none of them kindly. He had left a name despised by his townspeople. He was a hard, cruel man who worked his employees to death and tyrannized over his family. An old man in a leading dry-goods house dimly remembered a Brazier working for them many years ago. Yes, now he remem-

bered it all. Brazier had worked there a year, not more. He had drifted there from New York and had gone back there. He was a quiet, delicate looking fellow, really in consumption or near it, when he married Bessie West. He faintly remembered the girl, blue eyes, brown hair.

"Yes," Joe agreed, blue eyes, but the hair was now gray.

The father had been a monster with steel blue eyes, as hard and cold as eyes could be. He had been a self-made man and despised those less fortunate than himself. As he mounted the ladder he kicked the rungs away by which he had climbed, lest the way be made easier for some one less fortunate. Joe understood now where Arthur got some of his hard, cold traits. He must be more lenient with the poor fellow in future.

West's son had been a weakling and had gone through his share of the money left by his father, and the other daughter had been lost in an earthquake in Japan many years

ago. This was all the information the young man could glean, and he returned more convinced than ever of the truth of the woman's story.

Arthur was not at all surprised and, though he thanked Joe coldly, he informed him that it was useless to take further trouble in the matter since the principal one concerned was satisfied. Joe vaguely wondered if Arthur thought that he, Joe, was rushing around the country purely and solely for Arthur's sake. To the latter he had not entered deeply into the history of his grandfather. He could not bring himself to paint for the grandson the inhuman monster that had been the real, though remote, cause of the present tragedy.

The next two weeks were spent by the judge, his brother-in-law, and Dr. Joë, in answering advertisements and following false clues. Upon all these wild goose-chases Arthur looked with disdain. He was convinced; then what further need for search!

At the office, the other young lawyers hardly

knew the icicle that now walked in punctually at nine o'clock and as punctually left at four, and out of whose mouth no unnecessary word escaped. Heretofore his entrance had been like the coming of sunshine. His good humor and ready wit had transformed the staid old office into the house cheerful. Now, when he appeared, the joke froze on a man's lips, the atmosphere became oppressive, so much so that all heaved a sigh of relief when he left the room if even for a few minutes. He worked harder than any of them, but there was no joy in his work, no enthusiasm.

What he did in the evenings no one knew. How much time, if any, he spent in his mother's company no one asked, though the nurse could have told them. He never set foot in the old home and, though he inquired for Clare, he never went to see her.

"Perhaps," Joe had argued, "he can not trust himself; his ice might melt in her presence, and he does not want it to melt."

"Then he should want it to melt," insisted

Dorothy. Joe had told her very little of Arthur's grandfather, never dreaming that the story would have helped her to understand her foster-brother as nothing else could.

As the days went on Dorothy was not any nearer to finding peace than she had been on the first day. Her mother's unnatural calm and her sweet patience were like the stab of a sword in the girl's heart. At times she would rush out of the house and, after walking for endless blocks, would turn in to the dear old church where she had gone as a child and there try to pray. She begged to have the cross taken away, vehemently besought God to have pity on her mother and father, but could not add, as did her mother, "Nevertheless not my will but Thine." The heavens were as brass and the stone that now seemed to have taken the place of her heart refused to melt, and when she looked up at the statue of Our Lady, that statue which she had so loved as a child, the Infant seemed to be holding his arms out to some one beyond her, but never to her.

Christmas day dawned this year, despite trouble and sorrow, and as Dorothy looked up at the starlight sky and down at the sparkling snow all nature seemed glad and peaceful and *she* was outside of it all! Could this world and the world of a year ago be the same? She and Mary were the only ones who went to First Mass this year. Heretofore father, mother, and Arthur had been there; now mother was an invalid, a prisoner on one floor, father had aged so many years, and Arthur, she dreaded to think about him, had he really turned his back on God, too? It was too dreadful to contemplate, and she tried to make herself believe that, after all, perhaps he did go; they really knew so little of his life. Since her Santa Claus days had passed away, when she and Arthur had lain awake half the night in order to be up in time to find the stockings in the dull gray dawn, Christmas morning, before the stars had set, had grown to have a happier and a holier meaning. No other Mass seemed like this Mass at break of day, and

Christmas would not be Christmas without it.

Even on this sad Christmas morning a little of the peace that was proclaimed in the plains of Judea welled into the girl's heart and she understood vaguely that there really can be peace in the midst of strife. She had a fleeting glimpse of the peace we all sigh for, the peace that comes to some of us but seldom and in small measure, and to others in abundance.

Once outside the church the peace she had felt as she had listened to the Christmas music seemed to desert her. The glad greetings of the congregation to one another and the wishes for a "Merry Christmas" to her now sounded like a mockery. Only last year she had felt like these others! Still it was good to think that there were people in the world who could say "Merry Christmas." Had she been older she would have known that many of them said it with a heavy enough heart, but had learned wisdom and had even found peace in the school of sorrow.

The months dragged along and Dr. Joe announced that Clare was getting well slowly but surely; she still, however, was forbidden to go up or down stairs, and not until June would this embargo be removed. It was decided that they would take a cottage at Sea View for the summer. It was not far from the city and Joe could run down frequently to see his patient.

They had all, somehow, come to look upon him as the brains of the establishment and Dorothy had discovered that life without him would be something of which she could not bear to think. In a moment, when the young man had been off his guard, she had discovered his secret and she carried the look in her heart. She was sure that he loved her and so she could now acknowledge to herself that she loved him madly, and was content to wait until he spoke. She knew he was struggling against asking the question for reasons that did credit to him. He was too generous to ask now when he was so much needed but, if she re-

fused and sent him away, they would be rudderless, and if she accepted it might be his help, not himself, that she might accept. She loved him all the more for this "sublime self-renunciation," as she called it, and at times she longed to tell him that it was unnecessary, but her pride rebelled at thus offering herself; and so for poor Joe the struggle went on. A hundred times a day he told himself that he could not hold out a moment longer.

Arthur's mother, meanwhile, was becoming weaker and weaker and might go off at any moment and still might last for months.

Clare often mentioned this fact to her daughter and anxiously scanned the girl's face.

"What do you mean, Mother?" Dorothy asked one day, made uneasy by her mother's repeatedly recurring to the same subject.

"Oh, daughter dear, if I could only go to her! She may die without ever making her peace with God! Think what that would mean! We here and not moving a hand to help!"

What did her mother mean? Did she want her, Dorothy, to go to *that woman*? "Mother!" cried the girl, "I can't; I don't know how to help. Ask Aunt Mabel."

"No," sighed the mother, "Aunt Mabel would never do. She can not forgive her, and it must be some one who can. Alice tried, but was a hopeless failure. She preaches, you know, a little too much to do any good. Dear girlie, won't you try?"

Dorothy was on her feet in a moment walking up and down the room. "You don't know, Mother, what you ask. I, too, hate her and he would think I was interfering. If Eva were here she might do it, but not I. It needs some one who is good, and all love as God is."

But Dorothy saw that her mother was not convinced.

"Do you hate her so much that you could see her go down into eternal darkness, without as much as lifting a finger to save her?" asked Clare quietly.

"No, no," answered the girl, "I could not

hate like that. But she will not listen to me and I have no power to help if I tried."

"If you really want to help," persisted Clare, "God will put words into your mouth."

Dorothy stood motionless by the window, absently watching the falling rain. Suddenly her face flushed and she turned quickly away. She had seen the cruel Marie vivaciously talking to a tall man, who was helping her over a puddle. The girl remembered with heat how the faithless one had sent Arthur back his ring the day after the court scene, with never a word of explanation.

"Mother," she began, coming up to the invalid's chair, "I will go to-morrow, and if I don't succeed pray for me and I will go again, and, as you say, God may help me."

"God love you!" cried the mother, and for a moment the old fire lighted up the dear eyes and an impulsive kiss was the girl's reward.

When Dorothy could escape to her room a storm of tears came, the first in months, and the flood relieved the pressure and courage

came with a determination not to look back. She went the next day as she had promised, but the sick woman received her with suspicion and refused every advance the girl tried to make. Dorothy was wiser than to broach the real reason of her visit and went away conscious that nothing had been gained, and with a feeling of abhorrence for the woman, a physical repulsion that she knew would make the battle all the harder. She made several more visits before leaving for the seashore, but, though she began to feel more at her ease with the woman, little progress was made. Flowers, fruit, and little presents were alike spurned and a suspicious look followed her if she moved about the room. It was fighting against great odds and most disheartening. It was impossible to broach the subject of religion without first securing the patient's confidence.

Dr. Joe now declared that Arthur's mother was improving and might live on until the winter, though there was no knowing when a

change might come. He promised to wire at once of any immediate danger, and Clare and Dorothy had to be content with this.

Dorothy felt sure that her mother would have succeeded long ago; Joe was not so sure; but that was, of course, she told herself, due to his ridiculous blindness to her faults.

CHAPTER XIV

THREE years, only three years, and yet how like thirty-three years! So thought Dorothy as she looked out over the blue sea. "What a happy, happy time that summer had been and how different this!" She was sitting in the sand with an umbrella at her back, looking out over the same ocean she had watched with joy only three years before. Now all the joy seemed to be gone out of life and she was still young, only nineteen, but there did not seem any possibility of the tide ever turning. Her heart was full of passionate "hating," as she herself expressed it.

On this particular afternoon she was not at peace with God, the world or herself. She was in one of her rebellious moods and all nature seemed against her, the sky and the sea in particular.

She glanced towards the porch of their cottage and caught a glimpse of her mother reclining in her invalid chair, an open book in her lap and her eyes on the sea.

The hot blood rushed to Dorothy's head. At that moment she really thought she hated Arthur with all her might, Arthur, who this time three years ago had been her hero! Her dear, beautiful mother to be helpless, that laugh that had been so contagious to be hushed, perhaps forever! The thought seemed to smother her, and yet had any one else blamed Arthur she would have been the first to defend him. She heard a step, or rather felt it, in the sand, and said without turning:

"Doctor, is it you?"

In a moment he was beside her and had relieved her of her umbrella; but they were neither of them in a very talkative mood. Neither spoke for sometime, then Dorothy cried passionately.

"I don't believe I love the sea any more! It is not calming; it is cruel and restless just

like myself. It is not like mother; she possesses the peace of the eternal hills, yet she loves the ocean and is always soothed by it. To me now it seems always the same, always restless, uneasy, just like myself. It never changes at all; it is never comforted."

"There you are wrong," answered Joe. "It is your mood that does not change, not the sea. To me it is never the same for two seconds. Look now! See the sunlight and the shadow upon the waters, see them chase each other. Don't you call that change?"

"Ah, well," said Dorothy, "the shadow is always chasing and covering up the sunlight; the sadness of the sea is greater than the joy."

"You are wrong again," returned Joe, "for the sunlight is getting the best of the shadow and soon the clouds will have passed and we shall have all sunlight. Don't go back on your old friend in your trouble. Surely," he added softly, "the sunlight will soon overcome your trouble."

Dorothy looked at him sadly. "I wish I

could feel as you do; but *do* you feel it, or are you only saying it to comfort me?"

"I do feel it," he answered earnestly. "'God fits the back to the burden,' they say, and I know that He must lift it soon because it is too heavy for you. I can't express all I feel. You are better fitted to be the preacher than I."

"Oh! You don't know me even for a moment or you would never say that. I always knew I had a temper; but in the happy convent days I thought I had conquered it absolutely. Every one there thought me patient and some of them never knew I had a temper at all; but since this trouble has come I have completely changed for the worse; a hundred times a day I feel a real fiend in my heart; it seems like something alive that jumps and sets my blood racing. I hate that woman, and—and—sometimes I think I hate Arthur."

"No, you don't," said Joe, looking down at the sand. "You must not say that, even to me."

"Then why is he so hard and cruel? Is he the only sufferer? I could bear anything for myself, but to see those one loves being killed by it, inch by inch, seems too hard a trial to bear. Joe, I think Mother is a saint, if there ever was one!"

It was the first time she had called him "Joe," and the color rushed to his face like a girl. Dorothy saw the flush, and not dreaming of the cause exclaimed,

"There, I have talked too much and am embarrassing you with confidences; but I will promise not to do it again. I never told anybody so much before—and—and—I shall never do it again."

"Don't say that," implored Joe. "I love to hear all you have to say; but I am at a loss to find words of consolation. God knows I would move heaven and earth to help you and save you pain!"

"Indeed, indeed, I know you would," the girl answered impulsively, "and God only knows what you have done for us, and to-day you have

saved me from myself. I just had to blow off and you were good enough to listen, and though it is really raining now I am not going to say that the shadow has won, as I would had you not come, because you have helped me to believe that 'Behind the cloud is the sun still shining,' though it is hard to believe it at times. If it were not for Mother's faith and yours I don't know what would become of me. But, come, it really *is* raining."

Joe's own heart was as rebellious as hers, but his rebellion was that *she* must suffer. To know that he was powerless to lessen the pain made him restless and he determined to set off on another wild-goose chase; anything, he told himself, so as to be doing something active. His unspoken love seemed to be crushing his heart and there were moments when he felt that he must throw aside all considerations and tell her. But the thought that she might not be able to give what he asked held him back as nothing else could.

During all this year Eva had written Dor-

othy long sympathetic letters. She was constantly referring to poor Arthur until her friend became impatient and longed to write that the pity should not be all on one side. She would tell Eva how he really had acted; but no, such disloyalty was impossible; and, after all, she herself pitied him more than Eva did. If Eva did not understand all it was only another trial.

Sister Frances wrote frequently and urged the girl to write like her old self, complaining that her letters were stilted and seemed forced. But, though Dorothy longed to see her and tell this dear friend all, loyalty again prevented. Her mother's condition, while much better than it had been, still made an absence of even a few hours seem impossible. She knew that she could not even run up to see Sister Frances in peace. She would be in terror of what might happen in her absence.

The summer passed away quietly, if not peacefully, and it was September once more. Soon after their return to the city Joe ap-

peared and his restless, uneasy manner made Dorothy anxious.

"What is it?" she asked quietly. "Any bad news?"

"No, no," he answered, "only that I cannot bear to think of another winter. I am restless and have decided to go once more to Joyceville, not that there is anything new; but I suddenly thought of the priest who went frequently to see the woman who died claiming to be Arthur's mother. I called at the rectory and found that he had been transferred years ago and is now in Europe in very poor health and may, in fact, never return. Stupid that I never thought of him before, though doubtless he could throw little light on the subject, as I don't believe the woman ever told her real story. Thinking of him has made me determine to try once more for a clue though, to tell the truth, I have little hope of a happy result."

"Then why this wild trip?" asked Dorothy, and in spite of herself her voice trembled. He

would be gone three or four days and she needed his help so much! Mrs. Brazier was weaker, and what if anything should happen in his absence!

"Don't go!" she pleaded. "She might die in your absence."

"Well, there is nothing I can do for her," he argued. "Call Dr. Keene if any change should come."

So he seemed determined to go and she felt that she had not the right to prevent him. If she had only known that he would have changed his plans in a moment had she only said, "Stay for *my* sake!"

The day following the doctor's departure the change came. At three o'clock that afternoon the nurse phoned that Dr. Keene had been there and said that twenty-hours, at most, was all the patient could live.

Clare and Dorothy looked into each other's eyes long and understandingly.

"I am going, Mother," said the daughter,

"but oh, if it were only you there would be no doubt of the outcome."

"I have no doubt as it is," answered the mother. "God bless you, dear!" and she kissed the girl fervently. Dorothy hurried away to hide the tears.

She walked rapidly down the street toward the church. It was the first Friday and St. — Church had Exposition all day.

As Dorothy threw herself on her knees before the high altar the ugly rebellious feelings that had tortured her for the past year seemed to melt away and she could not believe that they had ever been. It seemed so easy now to pray. She begged God to help her to-day for she *must* save a human soul both for that soul's sake and for her own, and she was so powerless alone! A wonderful peace entered her heart, and as her gaze wandered to the Blessed Mother's statue the Infant seemed to be smiling down at *her* and the little arms were outstretched to *her*.

When she rose from her knees and left the church she was strong, oh so much stronger than she had ever been in her life before. She was sure God would help her and most hopeful of the result.

She called at the rectory where Father Tiernan, who had known her since her childhood, listened to her story and promised to be ready when called.

"I will not leave the house until I hear from you," he said, "and if I don't hear soon I will go anyway."

She thanked him and hurried away, certain that if there was one man in the world capable of saving a soul that man was Father Tiernan.

The nurse met her at the door and told her of the patient's condition and of her restlessness.

"It is awful," she said, "but I fear there is little hope of your succeeding with her even now."

Dorothy removed her wraps quietly and entered the sick-room.

"Why do you come now?" almost snarled the patient. "You want to watch me die and gloat over the good riddance it will be to Arthur!"

"No, no," answered the girl. "Dead or alive, you are his mother. I only want you to go to God, where you will be really happy. You have had a hard life here and perhaps not all your troubles were your own fault; perhaps you had no one to help you when you needed help."

"What do you care where I go?" asked the woman sharply. "Why are you so anxious for me?"

"Because," Dorothy answered slowly, "first of all I know God wants you, and secondly because my own mother is so anxious for you. Oh! I can not tell you how anxious! She has hardly thought of anything else for weeks."

"Your mother!" cried the sufferer. "Why she must hate me! I have been the cause of all her troubles."

"She does not know what hate means," continued the girl. "She is sorry for you, infi-

nately sorry for you, and one of her greatest crosses is, that she can not be with you now when you need a woman's help and sympathy."

The hard face softened a little.

"Tell me about her," she urged in an eager tone. "I can't believe it; and the judge—and is he now hard to such as me?"

"No, no," said Dorothy, "he is even more merciful than ever." Then she tried to paint for the dying woman her mother's and father's life together, their aims and ideals (as she understood them), and the practical application of all their theories.

The woman listened spellbound.

"I am not like them," Dorothy went on. "Sometimes I am very bad, that is, I am in my heart, and, if I were not protected as I am and had no one to care what became of me, perhaps I would be in your position to-day."

The weak eyes were now on the speaker's face, and trust was beginning to dawn where suspicion had held full sway.

"But tell me," she asked eagerly, holding the

girl's wrists as in a vice, "tell me again, why do you want to save me? Is it because I am Arthur's mother?"

"I had not thought much of that at all," replied Dorothy. "It does not make any difference whose mother you are. Even if you were nobody's mother, you are God's child and He wants to save you, and so do I, for no one's sake but your own. Your soul is just as valuable as that of any king's, and God is offering you forgiveness and peace and rest. He has sent a pretty weak representative, so you will have to help me all you can. I can't save your soul, much as I long to do it; but *you* can and you *must*, oh, you *must*!"

The woman relaxed her hold and sank back exhausted. "Go on," she whispered, "tell me more. How can God want such as me? I like to hear your voice."

It was a hard task and new to the girl and she felt that Father Tiernan could have spoken with much more eloquence and authority on this subject; however, she knew that the mo-

ment had not yet arrived when it would be safe to mention him. She spoke from her heart, and somehow the words seemed to come.

"You almost make me believe that He can forgive!" cried the dying woman, sitting up in the bed; "but I am going to test you. If you can forgive I know that God will. Listen to me. I am *not* his mother. I was the nurse myself who, instead of stealing the child, took a large tin box containing all the proofs I have.

"It was the night of the fire and she rushed to save the baby (the father was dead), and she asked me to care for the box. I lost my head and ran blocks and blocks and finally to my own home, where I examined the contents of the box and among other things found fifty dollars. I loved money terribly, awfully, and the bills burned in my fingers. Well, I spent them, and after that restitution was impossible. In the beginning I had not meant to keep the box, but when I saw the money I lost my head. After a while I plucked up courage enough to investigate and found the house a complete

wreck and the mother and child had disappeared as completely as if the ground had swallowed them. I really cared for them both. The mother was like the boy, attractive and lovable, and she must have had a hard time after that, as she had never been used to doing any kind of work. I never meant to claim that he was my son; but that morning in court his look of scorn made me want to take his pride down and I risked more than I meant to, and then it was too late to draw back. I have really been sorry every day since; but I was afraid they would put me in prison, and perhaps they will now, if I don't die."

"Never, never," whispered Dorothy on her knees by the bed, her voice tremulous with mingled sympathy and joy, sympathy for the struggles and the weakness of the poor sinner, and joy, oh such joy! at the thought that the grief of the past year was at an end. "As long as I live I shall always care for you, and so will mother and all of us. Oh, it must have been an awful struggle, and no one to help you.

God must have found lots of good in you or He would not have given you the strength to tell all even now."

"He must have sent you then," said the patient. "I can't understand how you can forgive."

"Ah, but I do," said Dorothy, "and it is not hard at all, and Arthur will too, I know he will."

The woman looked at her in amazement. "If that is true, send for the priest, for I can then hope God will forgive."

Dorothy tiptoed out of the room and in the hall met Arthur.

"Arthur," she whispered, "she is not your mother. It has all been explained. It is a long sad story; but you must come in this minute and tell her you forgive her. There is not a moment to lose. She is dying and God will never forgive you if you do not forgive."

He looked at her coldly for a moment; but there was a holy light in her eyes that held his eyes and took him out of himself. It was her

mother's spirit; it was the look he had fled from all this year, the one look that he knew he never could resist. There was no timidity in Dorothy's manner now.

"Go," she insisted, pushing him gently toward the door. And he went, impelled by a force stronger than himself.

"See, he does forgive you," whispered the girl, as she and Arthur knelt together by the bed.

Arthur looked into the woman's face. What had wrought such a transformation? She no longer looked repulsive. Taking her hand and looking directly into her face he said,

"May God forgive me for the cruelty of the past year as freely as I forgive you." And he rose hurriedly and left the room. But a wonderful peace remained.

Father Tiernan now took his place by the bedside and Dorothy stole softly out of the room, for her work was done.

CHAPTER XV

ARING at the bell and the sound of Joe's voice talking to a stranger made Dorothy wonder; but she did not leave the hall where she and the nurse were momentarily expecting a summons from the sick room. They knew that the end was not far off now.

After a wait of about twenty minutes Father Tiernan opened the door and sent for Dr. Joe. In a moment the latter was at the bedside. "Only a question of a few minutes," was the verdict.

Dorothy lit the candles with trembling hands; presently Father Tiernan began the prayers for the dying, and at the words, "Go in the name of the Son who has redeemed thee," the poor soul passed to its Maker.

One by one they stole away, Father Tiernan, the nurse, and Dr. Joe, and Dorothy

found herself alone for the first time in her life in the presence of death. But there was nothing to shudder at or tremble about. It was as if the peace of God had permeated the house. As she gazed upon the dead woman's face she began to understand, in a vague way, how God can love a soul even when hidden in a wretched, dissipated body.

Suddenly she felt an arm around her. Some one was urging her to come away and rest. It was a sweet voice and a persuasive manner, a voice and manner so like Arthur's, that is, the old Arthur's, and Dorothy let herself be led away without even knowing who her new friend was. Before she knew it she found herself reclining on a couch with Arthur's aunt, Miss West, beside her, for her new friend had hastened to solve the mystery.

"There, dear," she reassured Dorothy, "we will tell you the whole story after you have rested a little. You have been through an awful ordeal; but, thank God, you have saved the poor soul and——"

"Don't," pleaded Dorothy; "please don't say that. If you could only understand how little I had to do with it all. It was God first, and after that—my mother. I only succeeded because—because— But I hear Arthur's voice and oh, Miss West, it sounds like our old Arthur. He isn't going out without my seeing him, is he? Ah! he has gone." And the girl buried her face in the pillow and began to sob. All her self-control seemed to desert her now that the crisis had passed.

Miss West let nature have its way for a few moments, feeling that the "poor child," as she called her, needed the relief of tears. When the paroxysm had passed Dorothy was assured that the real Arthur, their Arthur, had come back forever and that he was now on his way to make what amends he could to the mother he had so grieved during the past year.

"A great change has come over the boy," Miss West went on. "I told him about his grandfather, and it was enough to let him see the path he was choosing and where that path

led; but, thank God, he has awakened and turned in time. He has gone now to make reparation."

Dorothy was on her feet in a moment.

"I am not going to be lying here as though I were sick when *she* is so happy and *he* my own dear father, who is always only glad or sorry just as she is glad or sorry. Oh, Miss West, you seem like a good angel and I can not believe that I am not in a dream! I love you now as if I had known you all my life!" And she, who was usually so diffident, threw her arms impulsively around her new friend's neck. The embrace was returned with interest and, as Dr. Joe said, "there is no knowing when the love scene would have ended," but for his timely appearance.

"Tell her everything from the beginning," commanded Miss West. "You know how to put it briefly, and that is an art I have never yet quite learned."

"Well," began Joe, "I went to Joyceville, aimlessly as you know, and there found that

sober town in the throes of the greatest excitement. All I could get at at first was the fact that *she* had not been lost in the earthquake at all, in fact, she had been living abroad ever since her almost miraculous escape when the house she was in had fallen in ruins. After a day she had been found unconscious and had been carried to a vessel bound for the African coast. By a mistake she had been placed on board this vessel instead of on the hospital ship, which was anchored close by. By dint of persistent questioning I learned that *she* was Mary West, the younger sister of Bessie, daughter of John West, the manufacturer of Joyceville.

“The next thing was to find the heroine; but this was at first a discouraging hunt. I was sent from post to pillar all over the town. At length I was informed that she might be at a certain Miss Ransom’s in Hoytville, a village about twenty-five miles distant. I took the next train and arrived just about sunset and discovered that the cottage in question was a

good three miles' walk from the station and no rigs to be had.

"However I reached the house about dusk and was very kindly greeted by Miss Ransom herself who, though very polite, informed me that her guest was resting and could not be disturbed. I knew I had no time to waste, so in a few words made known the reason of my visit.

"The poor woman was so overpowered at the news that poor Bessie's baby had been found that I thought at first she was going to faint.

" 'Bessie is dead,' she panted. 'The woman is an impostor, probably the nurse who took poor Bessie's all. But I must call Mary.' And she hurried upstairs.

"In her absence my eyes wandered to the mantel and just over it hung the portrait of a sweet, bright-faced young girl with Arthur's expression at his best. 'His mother,' I said to myself and must have said it aloud, for I was startled by an exclamation behind me. Turn-

ing I came face to face with the long lost Mrs. Connors.

“ ‘Yes,’ she cried, ‘it is his poor dear mother and I closed her sweet eyes myself; but,’ and her tone became imploring, ‘you remember the name of the people who adopted him? I have tried and tried for months to remember. When I came here first to wash for Miss Ransom I saw that picture and it made me all of a tremble, it seemed so like a ghost, like a spirit come back. She saw how I felt and asked me if I had ever seen the lady. Then I told her all about that time in New York and the three girls, and though she cried and begged me to try I could not remember, and can not now, the name of the people who adopted him.’

“I knew now that I had at last found the woman who could unravel the mystery. ‘Clare Thornton was the girl’s name,’ I said, and with a scream the woman fainted away.

“Miss Ransom and Miss West now hurried into the room and we soon brought Mrs. Connors to. Now for the story.

"Well, it seems that Bessie West had married Arthur Brazier, our hero's father, against her father's will, and he had immediately disowned his daughter and had forbidden his remaining daughter and his son to have further communication with the culprit.

"The girl and boy, both under twenty at the time, lived in such dread of their father that though they would have done anything to help their sister they were powerless and did not dare to disobey their father's order. He was pitiless and, when Mary screwed up courage enough to mention her sister's name her father flew into such a rage that the daughter ran and hid herself lest he do her violence.

"Five or six years passed in this way and then the father died. In the will Bessie had been cut off completely. Mary put aside half of her share and deposited it in a bank in her sister's name, and then began a fruitless search for news of her sister.

"It was not until ten years later that Mary found, in an old box in the garret, two letters

from Bessie, one to her father announcing the death of her husband and the treachery of the trusted nurse, who had taken even her wedding ring, which no longer would stay on her finger, she had grown so thin, etc. It was a letter that should have melted a heart of stone. The other was to Mary and pleaded with her to come on to New York or send some one for the dear boy, Arthur. She was dying, she wrote, and had no one to care for her own dear boy, her little baby.

“After a fruitless search in West — Street, where the people move in and out every month, Miss West, broken in health and spirit, and, now that her brother was dead, alone in the world, decided to leave forever the country of her birth and her sorrows and seek health and forgetfulness in travel. In all her travels she kept in constant communication with Alice Ransom, the chum of her young days.

“For sometime Miss Ransom had thought her friend lost, as did the rest of the world; but after many months she was relieved to hear of

Mary's safety. She, Miss Ransom, did not feel it incumbent upon her to announce to the world that Mary West had been found, and did not really know it could make any difference. She watched for news of Arthur still, though they had both really given up hope of ever finding the boy. Every Mrs. Connors she heard of she wrote to, and one morning the woman they had all been looking for so long appeared; not in answer to an advertisement, for she had never seen one, not being able to read, but to solicit work. It seems her husband had been killed in a mine disaster and so she had to look for work to support her family. Well, she saw Bessie's picture, and after that she told all she knew about the poor young mother's death and Arthur's adoption; but, try as she would, she could not remember the names of any of the girls or of the one in particular who had chosen Arthur.

"Miss Ransom immediately cabled to Miss West to return, as she felt sure that, now that the long sought Mrs. Connors had been found,

a way of unraveling the mystery must be forthcoming.

"On the very morning of my arrival, Arthur's aunt had passed through Joyceville and had been recognized. Tired though she was she insisted upon accompanying me, and here we are, and my story is ended."

When Joe had finished Dorothy turned to him, her voice tremulous with emotion.

"Miss West has called me the good angel, but I would like to know what you have been!"

Then turning to Miss West, "You don't know what he has been to us all this past year. I don't see how we could have lived without him. He has been brains and heart and hands for us all. Poor Mother would have died without him, Father would have been helpless, and as for me, if he had not been willing to listen to all my ill humor, I—I——"

But a kind arm stole around her and she could restrain herself no longer and burst into a torrent of tears.

"There, there," coaxed her friend. "You

have actually frightened Joe away. Don't you know men get frightened when you weep over their goodness; why they begin to think it must be time for them to spread their wings, and none of them seem in a hurry to ascend to heaven. Come, let us talk of the awful things he has done and he may come back to justify himself."

Dorothy was soon laughing through her tears.

"Now, I am going to find the doctor and send him in to see you professionally," declared Miss West, laughingly, and before Dorothy could protest she was gone.

In the hall the latter met Joe. "Go to her," she said. "The psychological moment has arrived." And there was a mischievous twinkle in her eye.

Joe stood as one dumbfounded, but she did not deign to notice and passed on.

How had she guessed? Joe, thinking as a man, could not for a moment conceive.

"Dorothy," he whispered softly, for the room

was very still when he opened the door and he feared to disturb her, "do you feel able to talk to me?"

She answered him with a look he had never before seen in her eyes, a look that caused him to throw discretion to the winds and hazard all.

"Dorothy," he cried, "you think I have been noble and unselfish all the past year, when in reality it was a joy to do anything on earth to make you even the least bit happier. It has been agony for me to see you suffer. Oh, dearest, I have loved you so long that I can not remember the time when I did not love you. I really had not meant to tell you now, and in this house of death I suppose it is unseemly; but I must speak; I can not keep the secret any longer; you can not dream how I have suffered keeping it so long."

"My own dear Joe!" she almost whispered. "It has not been a secret at all. I have known it so—so——" But here she became inarticulate—perhaps Joe may have had something to do with it; be that as it may some time elapsed

before they became normal human beings again; then Dorothy remarked,

"You certainly did choose a queer day and scene for your avowal, after such a wait; but, after all, let us remember that this house is blessed to-day by the visit of one of God's angels. Do you know I don't believe I shall be afraid to die when my turn comes; but oh, Joe, I don't want it to come soon now; yet that death seemed like a beginning, not an end."

"There, there," coaxed Joe, "do not let us talk of it. It certainly was a blessed release for her, but we will not dwell on it. I am too happy to think of death; the world seems too good to contemplate leaving now. I am the happiest man that ever walked the earth; many another girl would spurn me on account of my lowly beginnings; but I always knew you would not be influenced by such things."

"What!" she cried, "the daughter of Judge and Mrs. Lee influenced by such thoughts! Indeed, I love you more *just* for those early struggles. I really think I first began to love

you the night you told me about your early life. Now tell me when you first began to love me?"

"Oh, years and years before that!" he declared. "Do you remember the evening I sang 'Alice' at your aunt's and you cried and were so angry because I let you see I had noticed it? Well, I loved you from that day."

"That is nonsense," she laughed. "You could not love a silly child, and I was hardly in my teens then."

"But I did," he persisted, "and I longed to see you again and know you better; but I never got an opportunity until we met that first summer at the sea."

But while these delightful exchanges of reminiscences were going on Miss West was becoming impatient. "An hour," she argued, "was quite sufficient for the most elaborate proposal;" and, as she could hear them laughing, she deemed that the most serious part of the performance must be over, and so decided to end the interview, as the carriage had now

been waiting a full half-hour and John was becoming impatient.

She knocked upon the door rather more noisily than would have been expected from her, and there was a perceptible pause between her knock and her turning of the handle, though two happy voices had chorused "Come in."

"Well," she declared, "what have you two been doing all this time?"

"Why, I haven't been here ten minutes," averred Joe, fully believing he was telling the truth.

"Dear Joe, tell her," whispered Dorothy, blushing prettily.

Miss West's congratulations were as warm as her heart, and Dorothy believed the news had been a surprise, and Joe was too wise to tell all he knew.

CHAPTER XVI

AFTER Dorothy had left her mother on her errand of mercy, Clare sat for a long time at the window. An open book lay on her lap; but her eyes were not upon it, nor were her thoughts. She was thinking of her poor little girl and what she was to undergo during the following hours. The mother never doubted that the daughter would succeed.

As the time wore on, Clare's mind drifted away from Dorothy, and Arthur seemed a boy again. The lassitude of the past year was slowly disappearing and, though still weak, the dull pain of the first shock was giving place to a more poignant grief at the boy's absolute desertion of her. She felt that it was not because he could not forgive her; she was sure that his love, so sincere and freely given in the past, could not die in a day. No, she vaguely

felt, as did Joe, that Arthur was trying to crush this love from his heart; he was afraid to trust his icy heart to her influence. This was the only solution. How she wished that she could talk with him and show him that he was on the wrong road and that life would never be anything but a sea of trouble if he insisted upon keeping on as he had begun; even the death of this woman could hardly mend matters.

Suddenly she straightened up in her chair, all attention. That familiar key in the latch, not gentle like Walter's; but a great rattle and a bang of the door and then—she must be dreaming. Who could be coming up two steps at a time?

The familiar step stopped at her door. *He* would not have stopped. A knock, there was no mistaking; a sudden bursting open of the door and her boy was beside her.

"Mother!" he cried. "Will you take me back?"

"Thank God, at last!" she answered fervently as she held out her arms to him. Yes,

it was really her Arthur, the dear blue eyes had lost their coldness and the old-time lights and shadows greeted her.

"Nothing you could say or do would be too bad for me," he cried, "after the grief I have caused you during the past year. I feel to-day as if I have just awakened from an awful nightmare. Mother, don't tell me that I am altogether responsible for this—this—change in you. You must have lost fifty pounds at least." There was such poignant grief in his eyes that Clare hastened to reassure him.

"No, no, dear boy. The suspense of all these years when I realized that I ought to tell you, yet could not get up the courage to do it, brought on conditions that made the attack inevitable."

As she spoke the door opened softly and Walter entered to find Arthur and Clare once more looking into each other's eyes as of old.

"Father!" cried the young man, but a spasm of pain passed over his face and for once the fearless blue eyes were cast down. He had

seen the lines grief had furrowed in that face, that kind face that he had always looked to for sympathy in his childish joys and sorrows. Now, for the first time, he realized how little he belonged to himself and how much to these two foster-parents. Few of us, indeed, can suffer alone and few can be happy alone. Arthur despised himself in this moment of illumination as he had never dreamed he could despise himself. He understood, at last, that no one has a right to be selfish. The thought that he had been ungrateful was most humiliating, for he had always considered the ingrate the most contemptible of mortals. A great lump rose in his throat and a mist dimmed his sight; the familiar surroundings seemed to swim before his eyes.

"Cheer up, sonny," said Walter, putting his arm around his boy. "The light in her face is all the compensation I need. I have always blamed myself for this trouble. Now don't interrupt me. We all meant well, and we have all suffered, but let us now bury the past.

Father Tiernan told me the good news just now; but you will have to tell it all over to Mother, and remember not to leave out a detail."

And Arthur obeyed. Clare listened more, indeed, to his voice than to his story. It was so good to hear those deep tones again. "I love a bass voice," she was saying to herself.

"Joe has certainly been more than a son to you," concluded Arthur. "I can not understand what made him so good to us all."

Clare and Walter exchanged glances, which Arthur saw.

"Tell me," he asked eagerly, "does Dorothy really care for him? I have half suspected something."

"We can only suspect also," answered Clare; "but, I doubt not, we will hear something soon, now that your troubles are at an end. I believe he was waiting, and a better or more devoted husband my girlie could never find."

"He will never be cold, or hard, or treat her

as I have," said Arthur sadly. "She never looked so like you, Mother, as she did this afternoon when she came out of the sick-room. I was cold as a stone when she came toward me; but when I looked into her eyes I seemed to see you, and when she spoke it was as if you had spoken, and I was as powerless to resist as I am to stop the Falls of Niagara. Mother, when I think of the havoc I have wrought in a year, I believe I shall never hate a human being again. When my aunt showed me what my grandfather had been I saw myself as in a mirror, hard, cruel, despising the weak, loved by none and hated by many. I see now that Father chose the noble and honorable path and I am going to follow, even afar off. I shall leave the District Attorney's office and begin at the foot of the ladder, a lawyer for the defense and willing to defend the poor, first of all. I can see now what a hateful thing justice is without mercy, and I have not even been *just*, though I prided myself so much on the thought."

"Try to forget the past, dear boy," said Walter affectionately. "I am going to leave you now with Mother. I have an appointment downtown and you two must have the world and all to say to each other."

After he had gone there was silence for a time, then Arthur spoke. "Mother," he began, "tell me, are you satisfied with my plans?"

"You could not do better than follow in his steps, but—but—you are very different men; you have not felt the call to sacrifice yourself that he had; what fills his soul and life I fear might not fill yours. Yours is a restless spirit. Though both your banners bear the same device I believe your very natures call for different paths."

The young man looked into her eyes and understood.

"You don't want me to give up my ambitions and think I might better be myself in a poor way than Judge Lee in a very rich way?"

"Something like that I feel, but can not put into words. This year, hard as it has been for

you and for us all, has done a great deal for your character. I think I can now trust you absolutely. I do not believe you would abuse power if it should be entrusted to you."

"You always understand and say the right thing," he exclaimed. "I am ambitious; but now I think I would be careful of the rights and feelings of others in my climb up the ladder. A year ago I felt that, if I got the chance to climb, I would trample on anything that stood in my way."

"Dear boy," she answered, her cheek against his. "It was hard, through the gloom, to see this day, but I have lived to see it and I can forget all the pain in the joy of this hour."

CHAPTER XVII

THE twenty-ninth of November dawned clear and crisp. Though the trees were now leafless, the sky was a deep autumn blue, and the frost in the air made the blood tingle in the veins.

It was Dorothy Lee's wedding-day and the anniversary of her mother's and her grandmother's bridal-days.

Nine o'clock was the hour set for the Nuptial Mass, but long before that hour the church was crowded, for after the guests had been seated the edifice had been filled with the judge's admirers, and they were legion.

To the strain of the Lohengrin March the bride, escorted by her father and looking ethereally beautiful, passed up the aisle to the sanctuary rail, where Dr. Joseph Smith, her future husband, met her, and the simple ceremony began.

As they knelt in their places, their eyes on the High Altar decked with palms and white chrysanthemums, no happier hearts ever beat more nearly as one.

At the wedding breakfast Arthur, who had been the best man, and Eva, Dorothy's maid of honor, were the life of the party. No more charming bride had ever been seen, thought the mother, and, though Dorothy no longer could be her little girl, Clare, in her generous heart did not rebel. She was glad that Joe would at last have a fireside of his own, Joe who had had such an uphill life. That this fireside would not be far from hers both she and Dorothy had determined by taking a house on the block. She was thankful that her daughter had no fear for the future. They all knew Joe's true worth.

As her gaze wandered to Arthur, full of spirits and more like his old self than he had been in so long, it all seemed a wonderful dream. Every day the wish grew stronger that he and Eva would grow to love each other.

She would make an ideal wife, Clare thought, high principled, unselfish and ambitious, just the helpmate for a man like Arthur.

Miss West was enjoying herself as much as the youngest present. She was a woman who, despite her forty odd years, could never be anything but young, for her heart was young. She and Clare had grown very fond of each other in the last two months.

Aunt Alice was at her best, and Uncle Jack declared a wedding was just in his line, something that he really knew how to appreciate.

Uncle Tom was in high spirits and his eyes frequently wandered to Arthur's face. He was more after Tom's heart than Dr. Joe.

"It was good that Dorothy was happy and, after all, Joe was a fine fellow. He never let the grass grow under his feet."

Aunt Mabel was supremely happy as she glanced from the bride's sweet, joyful face to Mabel's conscious blushes as the latter's fiancé, seated beside her, whispered loving surmises

about the next wedding. Aunt Mabel felt sad and glad all at once.

Eva, though happy in her friend's joy, experienced a feeling of sadness, for which she could not account. She did not, nor could she, envy her friend; but she wondered vaguely if such things could be for her. This atmosphere of love, all these kind relations loving the bride and wishing her joy, these, she, Eva, could never have. But she was not by nature morbid and quickly shook off the feeling. She was beginning to care for Arthur more than she liked to acknowledge, and if she had only guessed that his admiration for her was fast growing into something stronger she, like Mabel, would be dreaming of another wedding day.

As Dorothy and Joe drove off amid a shower of rice they declared that they were the happiest couple that had ever started on a honeymoon.

"This time last year," said Dorothy, "I never thought I would be happy in my life again."

"Do not speak of those days," Joe implored; "they were so full of pain."

"Ah, but for them I would never have really known you," she argued. "Now that the pain has passed I can understand why all that awful year was necessary; but don't think I am going to be serious to-day. Oh, Joe, dear Joe, I am so happy!"

Clare drew a sigh of relief when the last guest had departed. She and Walter longed to be alone; they had so much to talk about. After the events of the day had been gone over, Clare exclaimed,

"How little we dreamed of this happy termination to all our troubles. I feel as if Joe had always been our son, and what a dear he is! You see our experiment in — Street has had more than one happy result. I shall never forget the first time I saw him. I protested against Mabel's taking him, but she saw further and deeper than I did. He seemed so hopeless and his surroundings were such that I could not dream it possible that he

would ever rise above them—and to-day he is our dear son-in-law. And Arthur, whom I loved from the first moment, is our dear son, for he declares we shall always be mother and father to him. Walter, his real nature has conquered the other, and even you, with your keen insight, now have nothing to fear. Tell me that you have not.”

“No,” he answered, “my fears have been put to flight, for the prophet’s wife has succeeded. You know I have always been a great believer in the influence of environment. Our experiment with Arthur seemed for years to refute my theories. Our ideals and your influence seemed to make little impression. He grew stronger in his aversions to the wretched. I could not understand it. It looked as if some hereditary trait was so strong in him that environment counted for little. This conviction slowly grew upon me, and so I drifted on, almost losing faith in my pet theory. But I could not lose faith in you and so I buoyed myself up with the thought that, even though

the prophet should fail, failure was an unknown word to the prophet's wife."

"Now don't!" protested Clare. "I disclaim any credit of which you do not take part. I might have thought myself a visionary all these years did I not know that you, a man understanding human nature as you do, thought me practical, and were inspired with the same desires and motives. Yes, I believe your pet theory has won in Arthur's case and with Joe, too, for had he never met Dr. Horne he would, perhaps, never have conceived the idea of becoming a doctor to 'help little chaps,' as he himself puts it."

"Yes," answered Walter, slowly. "But here, I fear, we can not claim everything for environment. I am afraid there was some natural genius in the boy himself, for where did he get the perseverance to push along so doggedly until he met Dr. Horne that day in the drugstore?"

"Still," went on Clare, "he loved Dr. Horne, and a nature like his does not quickly forget a

kindness done. Even when he was a mere baby he was an idol-worshiper. But there, I suppose, from the twinkle in your eye, I am on the other side of the fence. We women were not meant to stick to an argument, and what difference does it make which side I am on as long as they are both what they are?"

"Not the slightest in the world," laughed Walter. "And now we are going to forget theories and problems and be young and light-hearted again. I have a secret. Judge Green is to take my place for a couple of weeks and we start to-morrow on a second honeymoon. Yes, yes, Miss West has attended to your trunk; it is all ready. Now where would you like to go? Over the same ground, or——"

"Oh, the very same," she almost whispered "Dear Walter, how did you ever think of it? I love you to-day with a love of which I was not capable twenty-one years ago. Ah, that our girlie may understand love as we do to-day!"

"Do you know," answered her husband, "I

think my love on that day was as the mountain stream, full of joy and gladness, dashing on toward the sea without the slightest realization of the splendor and grandeur of that vision."

"And to-day?" his wife softly interposed.

"To-day," he answered, "the mountain stream has seen the vision."

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